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ABSTRACT

An appraisal of elective programs in the English curricula of American high schools during the last decade is presented. Elective courses are defined as programs at one or more grade levels which allow students to choose courses that appeal to them from a wide variety of offerings. The study is based on data from over 100 programs in 37 states. The examination proceeds from a discussion of the rationales for these programs to examinations of program structures, patterns of course offerings, course designs, methods and results of evaluation. It concludes with a discussion of some of the important problems and promises of elective programs. A bibliography; a list of schools contributing program guides, questionnaire responses and/or other materials; a list of schools to contact for information about their elective programs; and a copy of the questionnaire that was sent to the department chairmen participating in the study are also included. (Author/DI)

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Alternatives in English:
A Critical Appraisal of Elective Programs

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Foreword to the Series

The National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD—formerly the Bureau of Research) of the United States Office of Education has in recent years considerably expanded its support to basic and applied research in education. It has also made possible and encouraged the dissemination of findings and conclusions. As the body of information derived from research has expanded, however, so has the gap between research and classroom teaching. Recognizing this problem, NCERD has charged ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) to go beyond its initial function of gathering, evaluating, indexing, and disseminating information to a significant new service: information analysis and synthesis.

The ERIC system has already made available—through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service—much informative data, including all federally funded research reports since 1956. However, if the findings of specific educational research are to be intelligible to teachers and applicable to teaching, considerable bodies of data must be reevaluated, focused, translated, and molded into an essentially different context. Rather than resting at the point of making research reports readily accessible, NCERD has now directed the separate ERIC Clearinghouses to commission from recognized authorities state-of-the-art papers in specific areas.

Each state-of-the-art paper focuses on a concrete educational need. The paper attempts a comprehensive treatment and qualitative assessment of the published and unpublished material on the topic. The author reviews relevant research, curriculum trends, teaching materials, the judgments of recognized experts in the field, reports and findings from various national committees and commissions. In his analysis he tries to answer the question "Where are we?"; sometimes finds order in apparently disparate approaches; often points in new directions. The knowledge contained in a state-of-the-art paper is a necessary foundation for reviewing existing curricula and planning new beginnings.

Bernard O'Donnell
Director, ERIC/RCS

Introduction

Elective programs may well be one of the most significant developments in the English curricula of American high schools during the past decade. They are programs at one or more grade levels which permit students to choose the courses that appeal to them from among a fairly wide variety of offerings. While no high school in the following study has yet categorically abolished English as a requirement, except at the twelfth grade level, students are generally free to select the courses they wish in order to fulfill the English requirement at a given grade level. Some schools offer electives only at the senior level; others, at some combination of levels from seventh through twelfth grades. Two retain the required course structure, offering elective "mini-courses" for one or two days a week during the regular English course or during the last three weeks of each semester. The courses offered cover subjects ranging from sports literature to Shakespeare and from the natural history of New York City to a survey of Eastern literature.

In one sense electives are not really new. As one questionnaire respondent pointed out, "English departments have offered electives for twenty-five years or more"—courses such as journalism, theater arts, debate, speech, and so forth. In my high school experience those courses could be elected in the same way that voice, typing, chorus, and orchestra could be elected, but only in addition to the "major" courses, which were required. The major courses, as far as anyone could tell, were as unchanging as the heavens—which, as we all know, are changing, but not so fast that anyone notices. For our endeavors in elected courses, we received only one-half course credit toward graduation. In contrast, the new elective programs offer a fairly wide variety of courses, including the old electives, for full credit in fulfillment of the graduation requirements in English. The ramifications of this more open policy have not been fully examined yet. For example, some colleges have refused to accept courses in filmmaking in fulfillment of their entrance requirements in English. However, the solution to that may simply be greater discretion in the recording of course titles on transcripts.

The earliest allusion to an elective English program in a high school seems to be in an article which appeared in the *English Journal* in 1955.[1] In that article Harry Overton discussed a series of five electives for eleventh graders. Each course consisted of three units of study which remained constant in all five courses, but each course had a different emphasis: creative writing, oral communications, dramatic literature, literary interpretation, or general English. Each student was free to select the course emphasis he preferred. While this program was an antecedent of current programs, a prototype of the elective programs in this study was first described by G. Robert Carlsen and John W. Conner in 1962.[2] Their article described an elective program for eleventh and twelfth grades. The program offered ten nongraded courses, that is, ten courses that were open to either juniors or seniors. The only requirement was that each student elect one composition course, one literature course, and one speech course. The fourth course could be in whatever area the student wished. The literature courses included two modified survey courses, one in English and one in American literature, a course in "landmarks of literature," and one in "individualized reading." The composition courses included one in writing problems (focusing on "writing situations found in daily life" and "a review of sentence structure, paragraph formation, choice and use of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, elementary literary devices, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling . . . as students work with concrete writing situations"), a writing laboratory for students who have "mastered the fundamentals," and creative writing. The program included three speech courses: one in the basics of speech, one in public address, and one in drama.

From these beginnings, elective programs have developed to the point of offering as many as sixty different elective courses in a single school. While the lines of influence and development are not clear, more and more elective programs began to appear in the late sixties, and they are continuing to appear. Some were influenced by the work of others, such as Carlsen's work at Iowa University High School or Project APEX at Trenton, Michigan, and some undoubtedly arose independently of antecedents.

A recent survey of Ohio high schools, conducted by James Nichols and Verne B. Wootton, testifies to the increasing interest in elective programs.[3] Of 392 schools responding (about 45 percent of all Ohio high schools), 281 still have traditional year-long

programs. Of the remainder, 65 offer a variety of sixteen or more courses. When asked the kinds of curriculum change they were most interested in, 78 schools with traditional programs indicated strong interest in elective programs. Both the results of the survey and his experience with Ohio schools lead Verne Wootton, English consultant for the Ohio State Department of Education, to predict that by 1980, 70 percent of Ohio high schools may be offering elective programs of some kind. While that prediction may be optimistic, there is no question that the trend toward elective programs is well established, not only in Ohio, but around the country.

The present study is based upon the reports of programs published in various journals, program descriptions from seventy-six schools and school systems in thirty-seven states,* questionnaire responses from eighty-four chairmen or supervisors in charge of elective programs, and various other published and unpublished materials. In all, well over one hundred programs have provided data for this study. To all those who assisted in the collection of this data, I am deeply indebted. Special thanks must go to all the teachers, department chairmen, and supervisors who took the time from their busy schedules to answer my questionnaire and to send program and course descriptions and other materials related to their elective programs. Without such material this study would be severely limited. A list of schools that contributed questionnaire responses and curriculum documents follows the bibliography. In addition, I owe special thanks to the chairmen and administrators of the several schools that permitted me to visit with them for the purpose of discussing their programs.

While the study could not possibly include all existing or proposed elective programs, it does seem to have included most of the current patterns. The program descriptions and questionnaire responses which have become available since the compilation of those included in the above counts and which I have seen present no surprises, no significant deviations from the patterns discussed below.

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*All program guides except eighteen of those compiled by Linda Kubicek Harvey in the NCTE/ERIC collections, *Elective English Programs in Junior and Senior High Schools*, 1970 and 1971, were collected from November 1971 to February 1972. In what follows, only published material, including the ERIC compilations, has been footnoted. In other cases, the school name has been included, where it seemed appropriate to do so.

The following examination of elective programs proceeds from a discussion of the rationales upon which they seem to be based to examinations of program structures, patterns of course offerings, course designs, methods and results of evaluation, and some important problems and promises of elective programs.

Program Rationales

Of the seventy-six program guides examined, many explained how the program functioned, but only twenty-five presented any sort of rationale for the elective program as a whole. The rationales that did appear consisted of a series of assertions about the advantages of an elective program, and some included comments on the weaknesses of traditional programs, in which the main core of English courses is prescribed, though it might be possible to elect additional courses in speech, journalism, dramatics, and so forth. The same was generally true of the various published articles examined. The main charges against traditional programs included the rigidity of the "lock-step approach to education" which suggested "that all students progressed at the same rate, had the same needs, and expressed the same interests";[4] the neglect of "individual needs and interests" to the extent that students saw "no significance in learning English";[5] the failure to utilize the special abilities of teachers; the repetition of instruction in grammar, literature, and composition at each grade level; and the feeling that "teachers experienced insecurity and frustration because of a need, under the traditional system, to have mastered every aspect of English." Traditional programs were a potpourri, a smorgasbord, a hodgepodge in which a student encountered a "bit" of everything but nothing in depth, and in which there was no clear definition of subject matter. As one advocate of the new puts it, "The English curriculum has become a hopeless hodgepodge of educational odds and ends often determined by the interest, or lack of it, in the teacher and by outdated or nebulous school requirements. . . . " He goes on to point out that "the obscurity of 'English 10,' 'English 11,' and 'English 12' is eliminated in favor of definite designations of course content and descriptions of anticipated resources to be used. Students and teachers alike have a concrete base of material on which to concentrate their efforts."[6]

Other criticisms of traditional programs contend that there is no English course that all students must take and no body of knowledge that all students should hold in common. Curiously, however, there is little criticism of some of the most significant

failings of the traditional programs, such as (1) their tendency to focus on the characteristics of literary forms and emasculated summaries of central tendencies in a literary period at a time when the students are still having difficulty in comprehending the *works for their own sakes,* and (2) their tendency to base composition instruction on grammatical analysis, sentence structure, and *x* ways of developing a paragraph, thus inadvertently focusing the attention of the student on meaningless forms before he has even considered the content of what he wishes to say, and, in general, ignoring some of the most important aspects of the composing process. Only one rationale points out that, "in general, the 'teaching-learning' process has been predominantly how much literary and grammatical data [the students] were able to memorize."[7] The traditional program envisions the teaching process as a transfer of information from books (or the teacher's head) to the heads of students, with the result that students never become involved in evaluating their own writing or exploring their own interpretations of literary works. Unfortunately, elective programs in and of themselves do not preclude some of these same failings.

Rationales for the various programs examined nearly always consisted of a series of assumptions concerning the values and operation of an elective program. The following is fairly typical of the genre and incorporates many of the assertions found in the rationales for the other programs:

1. Juniors and seniors are mature enough to make wise choices with the expert help of their English teachers and their guidance counselors. The opportunity to choose provides development of the individual.
2. Teachers and students will be intellectually stimulated by so varied a program.
3. The abolishment of standard and academic levels of instruction and the mixture of age groups will result in more democratic grouping for individual classes or sections.
4. Students will enroll according to their abilities, interests, and needs, not according to age.
5. The variety of courses allows for a greater range of individual needs.

6. Interests and abilities of individual teachers are not stifled. The best teacher is one who believes in what he is teaching.
7. A student may be exposed to twice as many English teachers in his final two years.
8. A semester program allows each student to get a fresh start twice a year. Fewer failures and greater enthusiasm should result.
9. The freedom to choose courses should heighten student involvement, and this should result in better performance.
10. The diversity and flexibility of the program satisfactorily eliminate the rigidity of the traditional program.
11. Greater creativity is fostered in both student and teacher.
12. By combining the student population of two grades and abolishing the distinction between junior and senior English, scheduling becomes more flexible. Fewer schedule conflicts will occur, and, thus, students will have an opportunity to participate in a broader selection of courses in a variety of subject areas.
13. Students oriented toward the language arts will have the opportunity to select more English courses under a system of semester electives.
14. Students will be encouraged through the variety of courses offered to develop new interests and new leisure time activities.[8]

The advantage of elective programs cited by more rationales than any other (14 of 25) was that they permit students to choose courses in which they are interested. Close behind were statements alluding to the increased ability of elective programs to meet the needs (13) and interests (8) of the students. Nearly as many rationales (12) pointed to the opportunity for the teacher to "specialize," to make use of his interests or special talents, as a major advantage. The argument is that a teacher cannot be expected to master all aspects of English, as the traditional curriculum demanded. Accordingly, a number of the program rationales (7) and several articles asserted that the teaching task is more clearly defined in elective programs, a result, no doubt, of increased specialization.

The responses of department chairmen and supervisors to a questionnaire about their elective programs provide more information. When asked what advantages an elective program had for students, fifty-three of eighty-four respondents stated or implied that elective programs provided more adequately for the individual needs or requirements of the students. Forty-eight cited the freedom to choose courses as an advantage for students. Some believed choice to be an advantage in and of itself, whereas thirty felt that student choice is an advantage because it results in greater interest and greater motivation to work, an advantage that corresponds with the second most frequently cited advantage for teachers, "working with more motivated students" (mentioned by twenty-one respondents). Only three of the eighty-four respondents mentioned greater ease in individualizing instruction as an advantage for teachers, but fifty-six felt that the opportunity for teachers to specialize or to use special interests and talents is a particular advantage.

Eight rationales emphasized the "flexibility" of courses, an expression which usually means that courses can be dropped, added, or changed as the "needs and interests of the students change." Twenty-four questionnaire respondents saw the variety of courses as an advantage, while twenty believed that a simple change in teacher is advantageous. Another held that having a variety of courses and teachers will "encourage students to develop new interests and leisure time activities." One questionnaire respondent asserted that "having three changes a year permits the teacher to become a more interesting person within himself." The most often mentioned advantage in frequent change of teacher was simply that "personality conflicts between student [and teacher] do not have to be endured by the student for such a long time."

One program rationale and three questionnaire respondents indicated that an elective program helps the student develop a sense of responsibility for his own education. Five rationales and fifteen respondents shifted the emphasis, however, stating bluntly that in an elective program the *student* is responsible for his learning and for the consequences of his choices (one respondent called it "fate"), not the teacher.

On the other hand, three rationales and seven questionnaire respondents believed that elective programs give "professional dignity and responsibility to teachers by making them responsible

for curriculum." It may well be that such feelings of responsibility generate the increased interest in and "revitalization" of instruction that twelve respondents report as an advantage of their elective programs. Indeed, the extent to which elective programs demand that teachers plan curricula for their own students marks a new kind of professionalism that is desirable and necessary if the teaching of English is to rise above mechanical plodding through an arbitrary syllabus.

Many other advantages are cited in the questionnaires, the program descriptions, and in various published articles, but most of the remainder appear only once or twice (e.g., "teachers plan better for a nine-week course," "national and state developments . . . indicate that an elective English program . . . is desirable," "teachers know more students") and need not concern us here.

What must concern us, however, is the nearly universal tendency to base the program on a series of unexamined assumptions. That traditional English programs were based on unexamined, even dangerous, assumptions is certainly no defense. The fact that underlying assumptions of traditional programs were never examined is, in large part, responsible for their failure. The assumptions implied by the rationales for new programs *must* be examined both on their own terms and as they apply to various aspects of the programs that rest upon them. That elective programs should and do "meet the interests, needs, and abilities" of the students; that teachers should specialize or teach their particular interests; that it is better for students to have short courses with several different teachers; that the choice of courses, in and of itself, will have a meaningful, positive effect on both affective and cognitive responses; that learning should be the learner's responsibility; that an elective program overcomes the weaknesses of traditional programs–all these assumptions and others need to be examined in view of the programs that are based upon them, and the examination should be a continuing process. The validity of assumptions upon which elective programs are built should be periodically reexamined and reevaluated. We will return to these assumptions, then, after an examination of program designs, course offerings, course designs, and the methods and results of evaluation.

Program Design

The variety of elective programs defies an easy summary. The notion of prerequisite background, the grade levels at which the number of required courses are operated, the course length, and the use of "phasing" all vary from one program to another. One might expect such differences to be based on the characteristics of the particular student population involved. On the contrary, varying teacher preference appears to be responsible for the differences. For example, there seems to be a pervasive, if not always articulated, feeling that elective courses should follow a solid background in "the basics." Thus, one program for eighth and ninth grade students calls for a basic seventh grade course to "stabilize" the program. This course, which all students take, deals with spelling, grammar, speech, composition, and reading skills. The elective courses in the eighth and ninth grades are presumed to build on that foundation. Another writer believes that the basics, or at least all grammar, should be taught by ninth grade and reports planning the remainder of the curriculum (forty-six courses) partly on the basis of that assumption.[9] Another program guide, describing an elective program for twelfth graders, explains that skills developed by the students in previous years will be put to use as "a frame of reference" for work in the twelfth grade electives.

One program requires a student to remain in a "basic instructional phase" until he has demonstrated competency in a set of basic skills. Once he has demonstrated this proficiency, however, the student may, at his own preference, move to "an elective phase, a no-more-English option, [or] an optional mode of individualized instruction." If he elects the no-more-English option, he "must counsel with the English department each nine weeks in order to renew his option." The basic skills which are appraised in diagnostic testing situations are certainly not terribly demanding, even if they are somewhat arbitrary:

1. If a student has an idea about some subject, he must be able to express that idea in writing and defend it. In doing this he must write or type legibly with no more than five mis-

spellings in each one hundred words and with some logical form of organization.

2. He must be able to express his ideas orally in a voice loud enough to be heard by those who are listening.
3. Given material written at the seventh grade level, he must be able to understand the literal meaning of 95 percent of what he reads.
4. In written or televised commercials, he should be able to identify basic propaganda techniques.
5. He must be able to distinguish between statements of fact and statements of opinion.
6. He must be able to follow accurately a detailed set of instructions.[10]

Of all the talk about basic skills in elective programs this is the clearest explanation of what is intended. Curiously, though, there is no explanation of why these skills cannot be developed or improved in various elective courses. Presumably, at least the first three would be emphasized in any elective course which integrates language arts activities. Another point that is not covered is that, though not very demanding, the basic skills are totally unattainable by *some* students. Are these students to be permanently denied the right to take elective courses that might stimulate their interest (and possibly help them become more proficient in the basic skills)?

Providing a diametrically opposed position to the above policy, at least one program guide asserts that "a 'minimum' level of achievement in the language arts before graduation that would be applicable and meaningful for all students cannot be devised." Unfortunately, the document does not explore the ramifications of that statement. Despite such manifest contradictions, however, it is generally assumed in the various curriculum guides that there is some optimal point at which students can begin selecting their courses, but such an assumption is supported by neither concrete evidence nor careful theoretical considerations in the program guides. As it stands, where to begin an elective program appears to be anybody's guess, and anybody's guess can be justified in one way or another.

Of the seventy-six program descriptions collected for this study, thirty-three describe elective programs for grades ten to

twelve, eighteen for grades eleven to twelve, none for grades nine to twelve, and six for twelfth grade only.* Four programs have electives beginning at seventh grade, four offer programs at various other combinations of grade levels, and the remainder do not indicate what grade levels are involved. The overwhelming concentration of programs involve ninth through twelfth grades, but there is disagreement about whether the program should begin at the ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade. The programs which offer courses at more than one level are often nongraded, that is, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students may enroll in the same courses. The assumption is that grouping according to ability and interest makes much more sense than grouping by age level. A few programs place restrictions on the nongrading practice, limiting some electives to ninth and tenth grades, and some to eleventh and twelfth.

Course requirements from one program to another reveal considerable variety as well. Forty-four programs indicate no requirements once students are in the program. Of those that have requirements, seventeen require only one or two courses, such as composition, speech, or American literature. One program requires that all ninth and tenth graders take specific courses, which can be supplemented by various electives; the full elective program begins with the junior year, when one of four American literature courses must be taken. Having filled the American literature requirement, the student is free to elect whatever courses he wishes for the three remaining semesters. Another program for tenth through twelfth grades offers a total of twenty-four courses, each six weeks in length. Students are required to take three courses in language, two in composition, and eight in literature during their three years in the program.

Concerning the most appropriate length of courses, there is substantial agreement, with fifty programs offering the bulk of their courses in eighteen-week blocks. The remainder of the programs offer courses of four, six, nine, ten, or twelve weeks in length. Several use a combination of course lengths, for example,

*The analysis that follows is based primarily on program guides obtained from schools and school systems between November 1971 and February 1972, and on fourteen of those in the ERIC compilations, for a total of seventy-six. Programs described in journals and other studies are additional and will be cited specifically.

nine weeks, a semester, and a year. In most such cases, the majority of course offerings are one semester in length.

For the most part, course length seems to have been determined more or less arbitrarily. The semester unit is simply an inheritance from established scheduling practices, although for some schools, offering semester courses represents a break with the tradition of year-long courses. The shorter courses are variously justified. A program offering ten-week courses for eighth and ninth graders argues that the courses "will accommodate the variety of interests and the short attention span of the junior high student." A program advocating nine-week courses for high school students cites the "psychological effect of shortness: student has a chance to make a new beginning in the middle of a semester." Another high school program offers a variety of arguments for the nine-week course: nine weeks offers a sufficient amount of time for students to study a subject in detail without losing interest; unlike twelve or eighteen weeks, a quarter system offers students the opportunity to take a wide variety of courses; semester courses are too long as well as too traditional; and nine-week courses were not offered in any other content area and were selected to help prove to students that the English curriculum is indeed changing.

Certainly the use of short courses merits more penetrating analysis than such arguments represent. If a program needs to demonstrate its revolutionary character, there must be a less superficial way to do it than by pointing to short courses. An even more important problem is whether or not the variety that comes with short courses has any real merit. Does such variety result in increased student involvement, enthusiasm, and growth? To what extent does the mechanical organization of subject matter into little blocks lead to increased pressure to "cover material" at the expense of organic development and individual student growth in language arts? To what extent does the shortness of a course hamper the teacher's ability to adjust instruction to the individual abilities and interests of his students?

Even working systematically, it takes a minimum of four weeks for a teacher to learn about the individual strengths and weaknesses of his students in the various language arts areas. In a very short course, that leaves only a few weeks for effective instruction. If the courses, like most college courses, are really intended to convey information, and if teachers can assume, as most college teachers do, that the students would not be in the

courses if they were not equipped or willing to do the work, then such questions may be irrelevant. One would hope, however, that secondary school teachers have not regressed to such professorial assumptions about the nature of teaching.

One of the goals of most elective programs is to provide courses appropriate to the needs of various students. In order to implement that goal, twenty-one of the programs examined explain a more or less formal method of phasing courses. Phasing simply refers to the practice of developing courses at various levels of difficulty. The most widely represented model for phasing is that used by Project APEX at Trenton (Michigan) High School. The Trenton handbook describes the following phases:

> *Phase 1* courses are designed for students who find reading, writing, speaking, and thinking quite difficult and have serious problems with basic skills.
>
> *Phase 2* courses are created for students who do not have serious difficulty with basic skills but need to improve and refine them and can do so best by learning at a somewhat slower pace.
>
> *Phase 3* courses are particularly for those who have an average command of the basic language skills and would like to advance beyond these basic skills but do so at a moderate rather than an accelerated pace.
>
> *Phase 4* courses are for students who learn fairly rapidly and have good command of the basic language skills.
>
> *Phase 5* courses offer a challenge to students who have excellent control of basic skills and who are looking for stimulating academic learning experiences.[11]

While only twenty-one of the program descriptions make use of this or some very similar pattern for developing courses, several others have made an attempt to develop courses for various groups of students. For example, the Burbank (California) High School program offers courses entitled "Adventure," "The Literature of Sports," and "Science Fiction," as well as such courses as "Japanese Literature," "Major British Writers," and "Russian Literature." It is reasonably evident from the course titles alone that the first three courses were developed to appeal to students who do not ordinarily find the study of literature an exciting venture.

In the Hickman (Columbia, Missouri) High School program, a course entitled "Personal and Creative Writing" is described for students as follows: "This course will try to meet the needs of the student who does not like the usual writing exercise in the traditional English composition course. If you would like to express yourself on an individual basis without worrying too much about 'correct' form and rules, this could be the course for you. Activities will be designed to appeal to students who are not motivated by the written word. TV, radio, and pop songs will be used. . . . " Another composition course, "Writing to be Read," is described as having been designed "to meet the needs of the student who wants to strengthen his writing skills. . . . The student who has already developed strong competence in expression will probably not take this course." Clearly, both courses were developed with writers of certain levels of competence in mind. Several other programs make an effort to offer courses for various interests and for various levels of ability, but a sizable number appear to make little effort to adjust course offerings. And frequently, even the programs using the phase model present a series of courses which are probably most appropriate for above average or highly fluent readers and writers.

The main argument for phasing courses has to do with meeting the needs and abilities of the students. The practice is a lineal descendant of tracking. However, as the Trenton handbook points out, it is the courses, not the students, that are phased. The programs using phasing believe that it accomplishes the same pedagogical purposes as tracking, but without stigmatizing the student. Further, most programs offer courses at one or more phase levels—a science fiction course might be designed for phases 3-5 or a film study course might be designated for phases 1-5. This permits students to work with others who represent a variety of interests, backgrounds, and abilities.

In some programs the phase categories (similar to those quoted above) are presented to the students, and the phase level of each course description is designated. Frequently, the language of the course description itself indicates the difficulty and interest level. Unfortunately, the language of some course descriptions is so blunt that one wonders whether it does not exacerbate the stigma of tracking which everyone is attempting to avoid. For example, one course description explains that a particular course is "designed for [students] who find reading, writing, and thinking

quite difficult and have serious problems with basic skills." There must be ways to devise course descriptions which appeal to slow or reluctant students without asking them to make a public admission of their incompetence by signing up for the course.

Despite these shortcomings and others concerned with the course offerings and the design of specific courses, phasing represents one of the sharpest and most laudatory breaks with tradition that elective programs have made. It recognizes emphatically that all students cannot and need not deal with the same concepts and materials. In many programs where tracking is used, all students read nearly the same materials, but at varying levels of what many program guides call "depth" and at varying paces. Phase-elective programs, however, avoid that error by making a real effort to offer courses that provide various experiences and materials appropriate to the abilities and interests of a wide range of students. A weak reader can attend English class without being confronted with materials he cannot handle, without having his inadequacies continually demonstrated to him, and without becoming hostile as a means of self-defense. Certainly, a phase-elective English program is not necessary to making instruction appropriate for students. Some teachers in traditional programs have varied their goals, materials, and procedures to adapt to various classes and even to groups within their classes, but within the context of elective programs, such adaptability is not only easier but philosophically more acceptable. The elective program which makes no special effort to phase courses would do well to give the practice careful consideration.

Course Offerings

Rationales for Courses Offered

Of all the program guides examined for this study,* only five present rationales for the courses offered. Several make some general statements about integrating language skills in all courses, but explanations of why particular courses are offered are singularly absent. Two questions that deserve answers in planning any English program are, first, which of the many possible course focuses are most appropriate, given the student body of the particular school, the goals of the program, and the discipline of English, and, second, why are those courses most appropriate. For the most part, programs simply present a list of courses, defended, if at all, by allusions to making the best use of teacher interests and talents and capitalizing on student interests. Many of the courses offered in the various programs, however, can be traced to traditional high school electives, to various aspects of traditional high school English programs, or to the kinds of courses normally offered in college departments of English. If the intent of the elective program is to develop more vibrant and meaningful courses, continuing to offer traditional courses without good reason is inadequate. On the other hand, it is equally inappropriate to offer new courses on the basis of whim.

Two of the programs that have developed rationales have no specific course offerings. Both argue that courses should be offered only after immediate consultation with the students, because that is the method most likely to exploit their changing interests and attitudes. One writer describing a junior high school program recommends that students be involved in the curriculum decision making, because "it is important to know and question and understand the objectives of any program." Otherwise, he writes, the "people in learning situations . . . open themselves to

*In addition to programs described in journal articles listed in the bibliography, this study encompasses seventy-six program descriptions: two of those do not offer a specific list of courses; four are from school systems representing a total of thirty schools; seventy are from individual high schools in thirty-seven states.

manipulation and exploitation, whether the learners are students in your classroom, teachers in your school, or scientists under contract to the Defense Department."[12] Certainly no educator in his right mind would argue that objectives should be hidden from students and most would support students' sharing in the formulation of objectives. But apparently this author wants students to "understand" course objectives in order to avoid "manipulation and exploitation" by "central authority." Unfortunately, he does not explain what he means by either "manipulation" or "exploitation." Certainly, some forms of manipulation and exploitation are inherent in teaching-learning situations. For example, when a teacher arranges reading experiences to which a learner will have positive affective responses, is he not engaging in some sort of manipulation of the learner's values?

Two programs offer descriptions of how teachers arrived at the specific course offerings in their curricula. In both cases, the teachers supplied students with lists of possible course titles, with a line or two of description for each course. The students were asked to indicate which courses they would select for their own programs. A final, shorter list of courses was then developed on the basis of student preferences. While this procedure has some merit, it hardly suffices as a rationale and is attended by an important difficulty. The final course list is still dependent on the methods used by teachers to develop the list of courses in the first place. This, of course, is a problem in all programs, whether or not students are asked to respond at some point in the planning.

Teachers who approach the problem of offering courses without first developing a considered rationale (a process in which intuition plays an important part) are forced to operate on the basis of intuition alone, but those who operate on that basis must hope for sound intuitions. In a good many cases intuition appears to have led simply to cutting a traditional program into chunks and offering those chunks on an elective basis. Such a program typically offers a survey course or two in English literature and American literature; courses in the short story, novel, drama, and Shakespeare; courses in basic and advanced composition and creative writing; and the usual electives in speech, theater, debate, and journalism. Another typical intuitive pattern is for the teachers to list as many course titles as possible and then to make a final selection based on what they would prefer to teach.

Both approaches are liable to result in various kinds of imbalance: excessive emphasis on traditional courses, literature courses, and courses for average or above average students, excessive compartmentalization of language skills, and so forth. Thus, program guides which contain detailed course outlines frequently reveal an absence of courses designed for weak students, a tendency to require compositions in various courses but to confine composition instruction to two or three courses, a lack of attention to language, except in the sense that every English course (like any course in any subject) deals with language, and so forth.

The one program in this study that does present a rather well developed rationale for its course offerings is worth considering in detail. The program developed by Concord High School of the Mt. Diablo Unified School District in California begins with the assumption that "those departments which cognitively and critically organize a curriculum around the objectives of developing basic literacy and which constantly examine their program will be more successful in educating their students."[13] The program accepts the assumptions that "English is not a collection of vaguely related units, but rather a composite which has its unity in the communication process" and that the main task of the English teacher is to teach students *how* to "operate" the symbolic system central to the process. The program examines various aspects of curricula and concludes that

> Concepts in the curriculum should accrete; the curriculum should be spiral, sequential, and organic. It should be organized around the cognitive process of the human mind. A curriculum which offers a maximum of elective courses (not just an eclectic collection of pickings, but a tripartite core, based on the three facets of the symbolic communication system, e.g., literature, language, and composition, with a series of phases in each strand designed to prepare the student for the next phase) and which offers numerous "chains" of courses designed to fulfill the individual's need is the most logical in view of the demands of the society, the requirements of the individual, and the nature of the discipline of English.[14]

The program then proceeds to define twelve purposes or goals in terms of the characteristics which the graduating seniors should display, the extent to which they do display them being the measure of the program's success or failure. The goals include the possession of the reference skills which make a student "free of

formal education"; various critical skills and attitudes toward the messages of the various media; and attitudes and philosophies about the significance of language and literature in human experience. These purposes are formulated carefully enough to provide a broad, but solid, base for the development of specific courses and course objectives. The courses available to students are developed in three strands—language, literature, and composition—which are described as follows:

> In each strand there will be a series of phases organized in a sequential pattern. Students leaving the ninth grade will be able to enter the appropriate phase in any one of the three strands. The determining factors which will decide the strand and the phase will be (1) the record of their achievement in that area in the ninth grade, (2) teacher's recommendation, and (3) the student's choice. Thus, the quixotic student cannot unrestrainedly gather a schedule full of enticing courses. The first phases in each strand will be skill oriented, designed to carry the student beyond his accomplishments in the ninth grade. The latter phases will be advanced study in the three provinces of linguistic behavior. So as not to fragment the discipline, . . . each phase will reinforce the organic principle that language is a symbolic system which is about "something else" and that the three strands are merely different aspects of the same thing. For instance, in phase six of literature much writing will be assigned and in phase six of composition much reading will be done.[15]

The particular courses generated from this philosophical base reflect the purposes enumerated for the program as a whole. For example, the outline of a course called "American Literature I" (not a conventional survey) emphasizes not only reading but discussion led by each student, understanding discussion processes, consistent relating of reading to the students' own lives, and writing as a means of "discussing" issues and problems. A course called "Symbology I" is concerned with the ways in which invented symbolic systems influence perceptions and ideas. Students discuss how they interpret their perceptions, examine the symbols of our culture, compose advertisements making use of symbols, invent symbolic systems, and read works by Melville, Kafka, Voltaire, and Hemingway.

While one may object to the philosophy or organization of the above program or find fault with the specific courses either as they relate to the rationale or in terms of their design and content, a program based on a carefully developed rationale can provide an experience in English which can be both elective *and* coherent.

Even more important, the rationale provides the teacher with a base for the continuing critical analysis and assessment not only of the courses and their effectiveness, but of the rationale itself.

Course Types

In order to gain some insight into the emphases of course offerings in the various programs, the 1,990 courses listed in the program guides of seventy individual high schools* were categorized and tabulated. For the most part, the process of categorizing was relatively simple and unambiguous. Courses entitled "Survey of English Literature I" are rather easily categorized, even without the attendant description. However, in a small percentage of cases the course descriptions did not admit to easy categorization. For example, courses entitled "Communications" sometimes appeared to be essentially the same as introductory speech courses, while in other cases they had a quite different emphasis. Categories were derived from the courses themselves in terms of how they organized or emphasized content. Because instructional approach was frequently either not apparent or highly ambiguous, no categorization from that point of view was attempted. In about 3.5 percent of the cases, it was not possible to place the course in a category consisting of more than one or two courses. Such courses are classed as miscellaneous.

Grouping the courses in various ways is useful in revealing emphases and influences that are not made explicit in the program guides. For example, in a communications model with the student at the center as both the sender (or encoder) and the receiver (or decoder) of messages in language, three major categories which account for most of the courses offered become apparent: (1) courses which emphasize the student's role as receiver and decoder or interpreter of messages, including literature, reading, most mass media courses, research, and independent study courses, and comprising 1,313 courses or about 66 percent of all courses; (2) courses which emphasize the student's role as composer and sender of messages, including composition, journalism, theater arts, debate, communications, business English, and filmmaking, and yielding a total of 612 courses or nearly 31 percent of all

*The program guides of school systems which represent several schools or those described in published articles are not included in the following analysis except when specifically noted.

courses; and (3) courses which deal with the medium of expression (language as language), including traditional school grammar, linguistics, and general language study, coming to a total of only 65 courses or slightly over 3 percent of all courses. The emphasis of most programs in terms of that model is clear. The student's role as an interpreter of messages is highly valued, whereas his role as a composer receives far less emphasis, even assuming that all courses include both speaking and writing. The study of language as language is virtually ignored in most programs; in a good many programs it is totally ignored.

Table 1 provides a ranking of the various categories of courses in terms of the number of schools offering at least one such course. The categories may be somewhat misleading. Utilitarian and creative writing are the only two categories of writing courses other than business English, journalism, and research, and the latter three types are rather specialized. So it is no wonder that utilitarian and creative writing rank first and second. Literature courses are divisible into several subcategories and every program offers several literature courses.

The dominance of literature is indicated by the fact that of the twenty-five course types offered by twenty or more schools, twelve are literature courses, and three other types (independent study, developmental reading, and humanities) give primacy to reading. Nearly 61 percent of all the courses represented in table 1 are literature or reading courses. No type of language course appears in the table. The most frequently offered language course is the traditional grammar-mechanics course offered by nineteen programs. And even if we include journalism, only about 18.8 percent of all the courses represented in the table are writing courses. The actual scheduling of course sections would provide a far truer insight into the emphases of elective programs, but, unfortunately, such data is not available to this study. Nevertheless, even assuming that composition courses are scheduled in multiple sections, the number of students enrolled in literature courses is probably far higher, because there are many more literature courses to enroll in. Conversations with the directors of various programs have generally confirmed that. Thus, a program may offer two or three sections of two or three different composition courses, but at the same time it will offer two or three or many more sections each of several different literature courses. For example, during a given semester, one program

TABLE 1. Courses Offered by Twenty-One or More Programs

Rank	Course Type	Programs Offering Course		Number of Courses	Percentage of Total Courses
		Number of Programs	Percentage of Programs		
1-2	Utilitarian Writing	57	81.4	111	5.6
1-2	Creative Writing	57	81.4	71	3.5
3	Shakespeare	48	68.6	61	3.0
4	Drama (Non-Shakespearean)	46	65.7	63	3.1
5	Poetry	45	64.3	56	2.8
6-7	Thematic Literature Courses	43	61.4	201	10.1
6-7	Speech	43	61.4	75	3.8
8	Journalism	42	60.0	92	4.6
9	American Literature Survey	40	57.1	85	4.3
10	Theater Arts (Play Production)	39	55.7	80	4.0
11	Novel	38	54.3	57	2.9
12	World Literature	36	51.4	43	2.2
13	Myth	35	50.0	42	2.1
14	Mass Media	34	48.6	39	2.0
15	English Literature Survey	32	45.7	57	2.9
16	Independent Study	31	44.3	42	2.1
17	Short Story	29	41.4	35	1.8
18-19	Developmental Reading	27	38.6	41	2.1
18-19	Film Study	27	38.6	31	1.6
20	Humanities	26	37.1	39	2.0
21	Science Fiction	25	35.7	28	1.4
22	Mixed Genre	24	34.3	30	1.5
23	Vocational English	23	32.8	37	1.9
24	Debate	22	31.4	34	1.7
25	*Bible* as Literature	21	30.0	22	1.1

offered thirteen sections of writing courses, including journalism and yearbook production, but nearly forty sections of different literature courses.

The three most consistently offered literature courses (Shakespeare, drama, and poetry) are somewhat surprising in light of predominant student attitudes toward such reading. In collecting data on student attitudes for the evaluation of the Trenton (Michigan) High School elective program,* I asked students to rank according to their preferences five major categories of reading materials: material about hobbies, plays, novels, poems, magazines. Table 2 indicates the results for the student populations of grades ten to twelve in the three schools involved, a total of 2,973 students. Clearly, the most preferred reading materials are not poems or plays but magazines and novels. Only 6.4 percent of all students indicate a first choice preference for reading poems, and only 5.5 percent do for plays. On the other hand, 44 percent would choose magazines first and 31.9 percent novels. Considering first and second choices combined, one third as many express a preference for reading poems as for reading novels. Plays do not fare any better. Further, poems and plays are placed in fourth and fifth position by far more students than are novels and magazines. Even though the attitudes of 2,973 students in the three middle-class suburban high schools of this survey may not accurately reflect the attitudes of students in the seventy programs represented in this study, certain predictions or extrapolations are possible from the data, especially in view of the fact that the general profile for each of the schools conforms to the profile presented in table 2. For example, 59.9 percent, 62.8 percent, and 63.7 percent of the students in the three respective schools list poetry as their fourth or fifth choice, and 48.1 percent, 52.9 percent, and 53.8 percent list reading plays as fourth or fifth choice.

The discrepancy between the avowed intention of meeting the interests of students and the actual course offerings seems obvious. If the majority of students express a definite aversion to poetry and drama, why should elective programs offer poetry, drama, and

*George Hillocks, Jr., *An Evaluation of Project APEX: A Nongraded Phase-Elective English Program.* Trenton, Michigan: Trenton Public Schools, 1971. The data presented here was collected as part of the total evaluation but has not been previously published.

TABLE 2. Percentages of Students in Three High Schools Ranking Reading Materials in Terms of Personal Preference

Preferences	Reading Materials				
	About Hobbies	Plays	Novels	Poems	Magazines
First Choice	12.2	5.5	31.9	6.4	44.0
Second Choice	15.3	13.2	28.3	12.6	30.6
Total	27.5	18.7	60.2	19.0	74.6
Fourth Choice	16.6	33.4	11.3	28.2	10.5
Fifth Choice	39.8	18.1	5.5	33.8	2.8
Total	56.4	51.5	16.8	62.0	13.3

N=2973

Shakespeare (poetic drama) more consistently than any other type of literature course? The usual answer to this challenge is an obvious one: a major virtue of elective programs is the ability to offer particular courses to students who *want* or *need* them. Asked to list courses that they *need* on their own, how many students would list poetry, drama, or Shakespeare? Clearly, such courses are not offered because of widespread student demand. They came into existence because of teacher preference. They are prestige items, offered if a minimum of students subscribe to them. Would a course on some less prestigious topic, say the literature of cars and racing, receive the same wide departmental support if only a minimum of students registered for it?

In terms of the statements in the rationales about the necessity for meeting student interests and needs, it is curious that while a large percentage of programs (at least forty-four of seventy programs in each case) offer courses in Shakespeare, poetry, and drama, only nineteen offer courses in corrective reading, and only twenty-seven offer developmental reading. Various explanations are possible: (1) the vast majority of programs are offered to students who have no serious reading deficiencies; (2) each English teacher individualizes instruction readily enough to insure that all his retarded readers overcome their deficiencies; (3) the level of interest engendered by an elective program enables students to read adequately; and (4) the ability to read at seventh grade level, as a minimum, is not important. One other possible explanation is that many of those who develop elective programs are not aware

of reading deficiencies among their students or do not have the expertise to develop appropriate courses.

The ranking of the most frequently offered courses indicates a few other curiosities. The genre syndrome is very strong, with not only poetry and drama but also the novel and the short story appearing in the top sixteen. American, English, and world literature surveys have clung tenaciously to spots in the top sixteen. Four of the course types—journalism, speech, theater arts, and debate—have been electives in English programs for a long time, or they have been offered in separate departments. There are some newcomers. The presence of such thematic literature courses as science fiction, independent study, and mass media on the list is encouraging.

The courses suggest another mode of analysis. They divide dichotomously, rather naturally, into those which emphasize literature and those which emphasize something else. These two categories, in turn, divide into courses which have traditional roots in English department offerings and those which have developed more recently. In the following tabulations courses are classified on the basis of their emphasis. For example, "Symbology 1," described earlier, appears as a non-literature course because its use of literature is relatively minor and intended to serve the function of language study. Ordinarily, making the distinction between literature and non-literature courses presents no problem. Despite protestations that courses in a given program synthesize instruction in the language arts areas, the program guides and course descriptions indicate that the lines are clearly drawn. Although reading might be incorporated into composition courses and writing might be assigned in literature courses, *instruction* in both appears to be restricted to the home base courses.

The literature courses most frequently fall into categories which represent the traditional course offerings of undergraduate college English programs: geographically delimited surveys, generically oriented courses, courses focusing on an author, and a few minor types. All of these emphases have characterized high school literature offerings for decades. The non-college-type literature offerings consist primarily of thematic courses and courses focusing on what are regarded as minor genres, such as science fiction and mystery stories. The non-literature courses fall into two major subcategories: those that derive from traditional English curricular offerings (e.g., composition) and high school

electives (e.g., journalism, debate), and those that are relatively new to English programs, such as reading and filmmaking.

Table 3.1 summarizes those literature offerings of the various programs which are similar in emphasis to college course offerings. Considerable weight is given to college type genre courses in the curricula of most elective programs. Sixty-three of the seventy programs offer at least one course delimited by the boundaries of drama, the novel, poetry, the short story, or two or more of these genres in one course. Taken together these genre courses represent over 12 percent of all courses examined and over 24 percent of all literature courses.

Forty-nine programs offer one or more survey courses, usually in American literature (85 courses in 40 programs) or English literature (57 courses in 32 programs). Seventeen programs offer 37 courses in various national literatures from Russian to Asian and Teutonic literature. Apparently, not everyone agrees with the formulators of some elective programs who stated that the survey approach was not a useful one. Indeed, all the survey courses taken together represent nearly 9 percent of all courses and nearly 18 percent of the literature courses. Still, these figures indicate a marked decline from the days when all programs offered, and all students were required to take, one or more survey courses.

Courses focusing on a single author and his works are common in colleges, where they ordinarily represent the prestige areas for the faculty. If we assume that it is, for some reason, a good thing to offer courses on particular writers to high school students, why should the writer be Shakespeare 86 percent of the time? Is Shakespeare the only literary genius whose works can be studied by high school students over an extended period of time? Of the 48 programs offering a course on a particular author, why does only one offer a course on Mark Twain? Program rationales do not explain why a course in Shakespeare is offered and why courses in other authors are not. More importantly, they do not suggest any reasons for offering courses on particular authors at the high school level in the first place.

The other courses in table 3.1 are based on principles similar to those underlying their college level counterparts. Select literature translated from several different languages and you have a world literature course. Select ten great books and you have a course in great books. Contemporary literature is a common college course designation which can be variously defined to incorporate pretty

TABLE 3.1. Literature Courses Similar in Emphases to College Offerings

Courses	Number of Courses	Number of Literature Courses	Percentage of Total Courses	Number of Programs Offering Such Courses
Genre Courses	241	24.0	12.1	63
Drama (Non-Shakespearean)	63	6.3	3.1	46
Novel	57	5.7	2.9	38
Poetry	56	5.6	2.8	45
Short Story	35	3.5	1.8	29
Mixed Genre	30	3.0	1.5	24
Survey Courses	179	17.8	9.0	49
American	85	8.5	4.3	40
English	57	5.7	2.9	32
Other (Russian, Asian, etc.)	37	3.7	1.9	17
Author Courses	72	7.2	3.6	48
Shakespeare	61	6.1	3.1	48
Other Authors	11	1.1	0.5	6
Other Courses				
World Literature	43	4.3	2.2	36
Bible as Literature	22	2.2	1.1	21
Black Literature	20	2.0	1.0	19
Contemporary Literature	20	2.0	1.0	17
Great Books	11	1.1	0.5	11
Ethnic Literature	10	1.0	0.5	10
Miscellaneous	16	1.6	0.8	12

Total Elective Programs = 70
Total Courses = 1990
Total Literature Courses = 1005

much whatever you want. The *Bible* as literature, black literature and other ethnic literature, literary criticism, and writers of particular periods (e.g., the Twenties and Thirties) make up the remainder of the courses which appear to be derived from college offerings.

In combination, the genre courses, the surveys, and the author courses make up over 59 percent of the literature courses and nearly 25 percent of all the courses. All the college related courses make up about 63 percent of the literature courses and about 32 percent of all the courses offered—a fairly heavy emphasis.

The literature courses which do not ordinarily have college level counterparts are listed in table 3.2. Nearly 55 percent of these courses are thematic in nature, and the remainder include courses in what might be called the minor genres—myth, science fiction, humor, satire, nonfiction, and biography. Those remaining have various types of content, including literature chosen because of authors' associations with particular states or because the works should be particularly enjoyable to the students.

The non-literature courses listed in table 4.1 are those which emphasize more or less traditional aspects of high school English programs. Many of the courses, including journalism, speech, theater, debate, communications, oral interpretation, and business English, have been electives for many years. Together they represent nearly one-sixth (17 percent) of the total course offerings. The next largest group of courses is the writing courses, with courses in utilitarian and creative writing totaling 182 courses (about 9.1 percent of the total courses) in 57 programs. The research courses (30 in 28 programs) may be included in the writing group since most require writing. But there is a tendency for many such courses to emphasize library research skills rather than writing. If the journalism courses are also included under the rubric of composition, as they are in some programs, the total number of composition courses amounts to over 15 percent of all course offerings. It should be noted, however, that journalism courses make up over 30 percent of all the composition courses.

The remaining courses in table 4.1 emphasize various traditional aspects of English and include courses in traditional school grammar, linguistics, courses emphasizing more philosophical approaches to language, vocabulary, advanced placement English, and practical or vocational English. Practical English courses are those designed for "basic" students whose interests are assumed

not to take a literary bent. The courses focus on the "practical" aspects of English, such as filling out job applications, reading and following directions, and so forth.

TABLE 3.2. Literature Courses, Counterparts of Which Do Not Ordinarily Occur in College Catalogues*

Courses	Number of Courses	Percentage of Literature Courses	Percentage of Total Courses	Number of Programs Offering Such Courses
Thematic Courses	201	20.0	10.1	43
Genre Courses				
Myth	42	4.2	2.1	35
Science Fiction	28	2.8	1.4	25
Nonfiction	20	2.0	1.0	17
Humor (and Satire)	14	1.4	0.7	13
Mystery and Horror	11	1.1	0.5	10
Biography	8	0.8	0.4	8
Other Courses				
Nobel Prize Authors	6	0.6	0.3	6
Best Sellers	4	0.4	0.2	4
Reading for Enjoyment	22	2.2	1.1	17
Literature of States or American Regions	8	0.8	0.4	7
Miscellaneous Literature	3	0.3	0.2	3

Total Elective Programs = 70
Total Courses = 1990
Total Literature Courses = 1005

Table 4.2 summarizes course offerings which represent recent developments in English programs. Reading courses are included here because, while some schools have offered special reading

*While some college catalogues may list courses of these types, they usually have a very different emphasis. For example, when colleges offer a course on myth, it usually deals not only with what happens in given myths but with ritual, psychological interpretations, and myth criticism.

TABLE 4.1. Non-Literature Courses Emphasizing Traditional Aspects of High School English Programs

Courses	Number of Courses	Percentage of Total Courses	Number of Programs Offering Such Courses
Courses from Traditional High School Electives			
Speech	75	3.7	43
Theater Arts	80	4.0	39
Debate	34	1.7	22
Communications	21	1.1	17
Oral Interpretation	14	0.7	13
Discussion	7	0.3	7
Journalism	92	4.6	42
Business English	20	1.0	17
Practical English	37	1.8	23
Language Courses			
Grammar and Mechanics	30	1.5	19
Linguistics	11	0.6	10
General Language	24	1.2	18
Vocabulary	10	0.5	10
Writing Courses			
Utilitarian Writing	111	5.5	57
Creative Writing	71	3.5	57
Research	30	1.5	28
Advanced Placement English	12	0.5	10

courses for several years, such courses were intended to be taken as electives in addition to ordinary English courses and because, unlike the electives in journalism and speech, the reading courses are relative newcomers to English. Ten years ago most high schools did not offer such courses, and many still do not.

Emphasis on the mass media seems to have grown considerably over the past few years. Units on the newspaper and advertising have been around for many years, but a systematic approach to all the mass media seems to be relatively new. Work in film study and filmmaking has been gaining momentum over the past ten years or so, but it appears that filmmaking as a course of study in high school is still only a minor concern, despite all the publicity such courses have received.

TABLE 4.2. Non-Literature Courses Emphasizing More Recent Developments in High School English Programs

Courses	Number of Courses	Percentage of Total Courses	Number of Programs Offering Such Courses
Mass Media	39	1.9	34
Film Study	31	1.5	27
Filmmaking	12	0.6	10
Independent	42	2.1	31
Corrective Reading	21	1.1	16
Developmental Reading	41	2.0	27
Miscellaneous	70	3.5	

Independent study is also a new addition to high school programs. The concept of independent study varies from school to school. In some programs, the student must establish contact with an advisor who will monitor work as his project progresses from conception to completion. In others, students sign up for a class called "Independent Study." The teacher of that class is then responsible for guiding the students as they develop their projects. In many schools no special project is required. The student merely agrees to read a minimum number of books. He may confer with his instructor about each book or he may keep a journal on his independent reading. The amount of reading and writing a student is expected to do varies from one program to another.

Although the foregoing summaries and classifications are generally representative of courses offered in the seventy programs included in this study, not every program, obviously, offers each type of course. For example, while most programs offer several genre courses, some offer none at all; and while forty-three offer at least one thematic literature course, twenty-seven offer none. It should be useful to examine some of the patterns of course offerings in individual programs.

In one program, of a total of thirty-one nine-week courses, fourteen are literature courses—nine of them focus on various genres, two on Shakespeare, two on myth, and one is a thematic literature course which is described as "mainly a structured workbook type course." The program includes two courses in

grammar and mechanics–the first is required of all sophomores, the second of all college bound seniors (two such courses is well above the average)–and one course in advanced composition which is limited to college bound seniors. The remaining courses include one in corrective reading, one in developmental reading, two in public speaking, three in debate, two in acting, one in oral interpretation, and one in group discussion.

Another program, offering twenty-five semester courses, makes no mention of courses in journalism or speech. Twenty-one of the courses are in literature, including three in the novel (English, American, and continental), three in drama (a survey from Sophocles to Beckett, a course in modern American theater, and one in theater of the absurd), two in poetry, one in the essay (from Bacon to Bertrand Russell), four on specific authors (Shakespeare, Chaucer, Frost and Cummings, and Hawthorne and Melville), one thematic course (the adolescent in American fiction), and one course each in satire, religion in contemporary literature, the short story, critical reading, biography, literature of the classical world, and "images of the Negro in American literature." The remaining four courses include two in expository writing, one in creative writing, and one in filmmaking. Presumably, the high school offering this program has a speech and theater department–and a very bright student body. The program it offers is clearly and strongly in the college tradition.

A third program offers two separate sets of courses, one designated for eleventh graders and one for twelfth graders. The eleventh grade program offers five courses, each one year in length. "Themes in American Literature" includes work on three "themes"–the journey motif, isolation, and death and immortality. "Language, American Literature, and You" is harder to pin down. It appears to be a general English course with readings confined to American literature. The course description mentions independent study, keeping a notebook on vocabulary and literary terms, and oral interpretation of literature. The fourth quarter of the course, the description states, "depends largely upon you, the student. Have you come to appreciate more fully a literary work as an act: a living presence conveying sounds, movements, ideas, and emotions? Many possibilities lie before you! Do you accept the challenge?"

The third course, to be taught in tandem with the history department, is an "American Civilization Seminar," an elaborate

survey. The fourth course is called "The English Workshops Program." The description explains that "a workshop is a place where people get together to do things. You will be able to determine what you study by forming and joining groups (workshops) which are undertaking certain projects, or by studying independently." The student is encouraged to "select an independent study project in an area that is not necessarily English-oriented." The fifth eleventh grade course is another interdepartmental course for two credits, combining English and business, a course for students "who wish to enter office occupation."

At the twelfth grade level the students may select one of three programs: the "English 12 Elective Program," "World Literature," and "Art-English-Music Seminar," a humanities course. The latter two courses are each one year long. The first program consists of a series of nine-week elective courses including four English literature surveys (including composition), one special survey of Elizabethan literature, and two on "The Comic Spirit–Focus on British Writers." In addition the program includes courses on myth, black literature, the *Canterbury Tales,* Shakespeare, the British novel, the short story, tragedy, independent study, composition, grammar, a course on "that elusive quality called 'taste,' " and three thematic courses. While that seems to be a generous offering of courses, the students are informed that since it is possible to offer only three or four courses during any one class period, their "ultimate choice of courses will be limited by the period [they] have scheduled for English." That restriction probably does have the effect of cramping the students' choices somewhat.[16]

A fourth program of twelve-week courses for juniors and seniors is based on a required ninth grade course on the "four major types of literature–fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry"–and a tenth grade course in American literature. The eleventh and twelfth grade elective courses include three English literature surveys, surveys of Russian and Eastern European, Teutonic and Italian, Greek and Roman, and French literature, and one course each in poetry, the novel, Shakespeare, contemporary literature, and advanced composition.

As with the programs outlined above, most programs offer a sizeable group of their literature courses in either the survey or the generic groups or both. A few, but not many, concentrate their

literature offerings in thematically oriented courses. As a matter of fact, only seven (10 percent) of the total programs account for nearly 43 percent of the total number of thematic courses. Twenty-seven offer none at all. The remainder of the programs offer in the neighborhood of one to four thematic courses each. It is interesting to note that some programs have changed their course offerings from a very heavy emphasis on the more traditional course offerings to include several thematic courses. For example, the Fort Hunt High School program, as described by Ann Jaekle in 1967, offered a series of six-week courses, most of which were devoted to genre, surveys of English and American literature, and Shakespeare.[17] The program for the year lists only three thematic courses. However, a set of course descriptions from the same school for one six-week period of 1971-1972 were distributed at a recent National Council of Teachers of English meeting. Those descriptions included sixteen thematic courses and a course each on grammar, poetry, Steinbeck, comedy, mystery, acting, and journalism. That represents a great change from the survey-genre syndrome.

Most programs seem to be offering at least a few courses that do not derive both form and content from traditional course offerings. A few, like the one specified above, have apparently revamped their entire program, almost entirely rejecting the traditional modes of course organization. The fact that in most programs a student is free to take or reject English literature, surveys, poetry, or Shakespeare is a significant change, but in many cases it appears that the radical change of permitting students to select their own courses has not always produced a concomitant radical change in curricular emphases and modes of course organization.

Course Design

An examination of the various courses in the seventy elective programs in this study reveals a wide variety of course types and considerable variety in the design of those courses. It is useful to examine the various common tendencies in the design of the courses: their content, their integration of language arts skills, and their provisions for helping students develop as individuals. Each of these must be examined in terms of the broad purposes and specific goals of the programs and courses.

Perhaps the easiest way to manage a large body of literature and other aspects of English is to divide it into the most obvious categories, according to country, time period, genre, author, etc. The content of courses dictated by semi-logical divisions, however, tends to structure the goals of the courses far more than teachers apparently realize. If one begins with the subject, the divisions may be highly arbitrary in terms of the students' needs, abilities, and interests. If one begins with an adequate analysis of the students and attempts to set appropriate goals, the resulting courses are likely to be far different from the conventional categories of English study.

While it will not be possible to examine the content and structure of every course, we can briefly examine the most frequently offered course types in literature, composition, language, and some of the minor categories, and a few courses that are relatively unique. Courses that have developed from traditional high school electives (business English, journalism, speech, theater, debate, etc.) are arbitrarily excluded from the analysis.

Survey Courses

In many respects the survey course represents the most conventional of all the categories of English courses. Not too many years ago, no student could get out of high school without receiving a shot of American literature. And if he indicated even vague plans to attend college, he was given a second injection of culture in the form of the English literature survey. Elective programs have almost entirely given up on mandatory innoculations, but the dispensaries are still there, and students who want the treatment can still get it in nearly the same doses.

In terms of numbers, the survey courses continue to have considerable strength. Forty programs offer a total of eighty-five courses in American literature, and thirty-two programs offer a total of fifty-seven courses in British literature. In addition, thirty-seven surveys of the literature of various non-English-speaking areas appear in several programs. In some programs a very large percentage of all courses are survey courses of one kind or another. For example, one program offers three English and three American surveys, and these make up 20 percent of all the courses available. Another program offers or is planning to offer surveys in British, Japanese, Russian, Canadian, European, Greek and Roman, Latin American, and French literature. These eight

surveys represent somewhat over 20 percent of the program's total course offerings. In a third program, which offers a total of twelve courses to juniors and seniors, seven of the courses are surveys—three in English and four in other literatures.

The English and American literature surveys remain much the same as they always were, the chief differences among them arising from the length of the courses (nine, twelve, or eighteen weeks) and the writers emphasized. Typically a sequence of English literature survey courses begins with *Beowulf* and ends with early twentieth century writers. Sometimes the whole survey is compressed into one semester or even less. For example, one nine-week survey is "designed to acquaint the student with the historical development of English literature." It is described as "a study of England's literary works from the Anglo-Saxon age to the Romantic period. It includes the poetry, drama, and essays of the medieval and Elizabethan periods and the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries." Another course description states that it will "acquaint the student with the great literature of England, beginning with the oldest epic, *Beowulf,* about 600 A.D. *(sic).* Interwoven throughout the course are the lives and times of the writers with interpretations of their works. Stress will be placed on literary terms as applicable and will point out that human nature is ever the same, that interests and problems of each era are much alike."

One program, offering three nine-week surveys of English literature, provides some insights into the typical character of the survey course. The first course in the series, entitled "The English Language Learns to Lisp," is described as "a survey of early English literature to 1620." The guide lists the following objectives: "The purpose of this course is to make the student aware of his ancestry. The student should be able to see and understand the changing English language. Also, the course is designed to impress upon the student the idea that literature and history are inseparable." While the course outline that follows does not make clear the way in which those objectives will be fulfilled, it does reveal the content and approach. For example,

> *Third week:* The students will read and discuss *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.* The students will also read, discuss, and enact "Everyman." (Each student will write a short allegory.)
>
> *Fourth week:* The students will read and discuss *Morte d' Arthur* and *Utopia.* (The students will report on various stories and tales of King

Arthur and will write their versions of the modern Utopia.)

Fifth week: The students will read and discuss "Astrophel and Sidney" and "The Second Shepherd's Calendar" *(sic).*

Perhaps even more revealing is a statement from the second course in the same sequence, which calls for an "in-depth" study of *Paradise Lost* by resumé. . . . " One is forced to ponder on the extent to which resumés are the bases for "in-depth studies" in other survey courses.

Typically, American literature surveys are also organized chronologically to cover selected works within a given time span. In one program a semester course is described as follows:

> In this course, the student will discover the beginnings of American literature from the colonial period to the Civil War. Great emphasis will be placed on the historical evolvement of American literature, not only who the writers were and what they wrote, but also why they wrote. The settlements of Jamestown, Plymouth, and Massachusetts Bay will be visited, and the causes of the Salem witchcraft trials and the American Revolution will be explored. Then the Romantic era will be studied, as well as the Early National Period. Bradford, Sewall, John Smith, Paine, Franklin, Freneau, Irving, Hawthorne, Poe, and Melville are a few of the writers to be studied.

While a set of five objectives is presented for this course, only two relate directly to the course. The remainder seem appropriate not only for English, but for the educational process as a whole: (1) to present American literature as a reflection of American life; (2) to stress the worth and dignity of the individual; (3) to foster in the student a sense of ethics and humanitarianism; (4) to demonstrate that personal rights are coupled with and realized through responsibilities; and (5) to develop the ability to analyze literature and to appreciate our American literary and cultural heritage.

Not all American and English literature courses are chronological surveys. Occasionally, one or more courses in a sequence are organized for the study of literature in relation to key concepts or themes. For example, the "American Literature II" course in the Manteno (Illinois) High School program "focuses upon the essential character of the American and forces that have contributed to the formation of his ideals, his goals, and his temperament. Significant recent literature will be studied within a thematic framework involving such ideas as the search for identity,

the American ideal, American social conscience, and moral tradition." While the course retains vestiges of the chronological survey, it appears to provide a more meaningful focus for the juxtaposition of works in the course than simply their chronological sequence.

Several programs (21 of 70) have jettisoned the chronological survey of American and English literature entirely. A few of those have substituted thematic courses for the American literature survey. For instance, in the R.A. Long (Longview, Washington) High School program, each student must take at least one of six thematically organized American literature courses which are developed at various levels of difficulty. Although each course makes use of the same American literature anthology, the other reading materials are apparently differentiated according to the difficulty level of the course.

One course, labeled "phases 1, 2 and 3," is entitled "Frontiers in American Literature" and is described as an examination of "the extremely mobile, adventurous, and capable immigrants from the Puritans to the present who have accepted the challenges" of new frontiers. In addition to material selected from the anthology, the course includes *Fifteen Stories from the Old West*, Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, Schaefer's *Shane*, and selected prose and poetry.

"The Minority Experience in America: Down a Lonesome Road," a course marked for phases 2, 3, and 4, "offers a look at various people who have felt outside the mainstream of life in America–from Roger Wiliams to James Baldwin." Its readings include *Huckleberry Finn*, *Black Boy*, Chaim Potok's *The Chosen*, *Raisin in the Sun*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Assistant*, and selected prose and poetry.

The most difficult course in the group, for phase 4 and 5 students, is called "Moral Responsibility in America." The course description calls for an examination of "the problems of good and evil, the struggle for equality and justice, and the nature of man." Readings for the course include *Moby Dick*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Intruder in the Dust*, *The Crucible*, *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, *The Sandbox*, and Steinbeck's *The Pearl*. The remaining three courses are also planned at varying levels of difficulty and differentiate the reading lists accordingly.

Poway (California) High School also retains focuses on both American and English literature without chronological surveys. In July 1969 the "Course of Study" outline included two survey

courses in American literature and two surveys of English literature, but the July 1971 revisions of course structures abandon the chronological surveys.* The 1969 surveys were traditional, all four courses having a great deal in common with the following description:

> This course offers the student the opportunity to read selected literary works that have shaped and influenced the culture of England up to and including the nineteenth century, as well as having influenced our own literary heritage. The student shares his reading experiences with others in his small group. Students will be asked to read poems, novels, dramas, and essays of their own selection as well as those suggested by the instructor. Authors include such writers as Chaucer, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Donne, Swift, Pope, Defoe, Goldsmith, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats. The student will write a short essay at the end of each unit covered. He may also be asked to write major term papers. [18]

In the 1971 revision, however, the four semester-long American and English chronological surveys have given way to a series of nine-week courses focusing on particular aspects of English and American literature. The American sequence includes "Five Modern Novelists," "The Lost Generation," "Science Fiction, Fantasy, and the Supernatural," "The Struggle for Freedom: Protest Literature in America," and "American Folklore." The contrast between the approach indicated in the description of the 1969 survey and that of any one of the newer courses is significant in several ways. The course description of "The Lost Generation" exemplifies the shifts in emphasis for courses in both the American and English sequences:

> In this course students will take a careful look at one of the most interesting and productive periods of American literature, the Twenties. The novels of Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald; the short stories of Sherwood Anderson, Ring Lardner, and Thomas Wolfe; and the poetry of William Carlos Williams, T.S. Eliot, and Robert Frost will be studied. We will investigate why these authors wrote about what they did. Particular emphasis will be placed on these writers as trend-setters in theme, style, and philosophy. Also, considerable time

*Poway High School Program for 1969 appears in *Elective English Programs in Junior and Senior High Schools*, edited by Linda Harvey (Urbana, Illinois: ERIC Clearinghouse on the Teaching of English, 1971) and is included in the analyses of courses above. The 1971 version is included only in the immediate discussion.

> will be spent in reacting to and writing about these authors' works. Background material on the Twenties will be provided through films, filmstrips, records, and tapes in the Resource Centers.

Chronology is no longer important. The problem suggested by the title and by the phrase "why these authors wrote about what they did" provides the course with an integrating focus. The limitation of the course makes time available for "reacting to and writing about these authors' works." In fact, the course objectives and outline provide for a great deal more student interaction with the works, the ideas, and with each other than did the survey course.

In most programs the courses in non-English literatures tend to be just as ambitious as the English and American surveys ever were. One semester-long course in Japanese literature, for example, is described as "a survey of the main trends of Japanese culture, religion, social institutions, and art forms from the Meiji Restoration to the present, through a comparative study of classical and modern forms of poetry and drama and a survey of the modern short story and novel, in order to show the fundamental differences (and similarities) between Eastern and Western culture." The course calls for the reading of several short works, short enough for students to read and discuss carefully, so that in terms of the main objective ("to show fundamental differences. . . ") the course could be informative and interesting.

In another program a course in Asian literature, described as a semester elective for seniors, is far more expansive, incorporating Indian, Chinese, and Japanese myth and literature in "a comparative and chronological approach."[19] The course includes the Vedic Scriptures, the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* (two Indian epics), a Sanskrit play, two contemporary Indian novels, and Gandhi's *The Story of My Experiments with Truth.* The reading load is roughly equivalent in the Chinese and Japanese sections of the course, each including several novels, various philosophical writings, and anthologies of short stories, poems, and plays. As the writer describes it, "the vigorous program builds toward a series of emotional and intellectual shocks, probably the most significant value in studying non-Western literature."[20] One of those shocks occurs fairly early in the course:

> After encountering the different attitudes toward life embodied in karma, kalpa, dharma, Nirvana, the caste system, etc., the class then

> examines attitudes toward sex radically different from the repressive taboos of the West. In the act of draining off conventional puritanical views, we engage in some experiments with open-mindedness closely related to semantics. . . . No attempt is made to change personal beliefs; rather a concentration of effort is directed at raising new questions for which, hopefully, there are no ready answers.[21]

According to the author, the function of the course is not "to promote a fake intellectual aristocracy" but to promote "communication for the survival . . . of our entire human family."[22] Certainly, the goal is laudable. The question is whether or not such a massive survey course is necessary for producing the desired effect. Isn't it more likely that quick trips through such exotica as karma, kalpa, dharma, Nirvana, and the caste system would produce precisely what the author claims to avoid, the promotion of "a fake intellectual aristocracy"? Could not the humanitarian goal of increased cultural understanding be achieved more effectively by a course structured around a few key concepts and the concentrated study of a few works related to those ideas?

Nearly all survey courses, whether English, Russian, American, or Asian, have three important characteristics in common: (1) they set very broad goals concerning appreciation of the "heritage" or "culture" of some more or less definite geographical area within some particular time span; (2) they undertake to "cover" a great many literary works, usually in chronological order, on the assumption that an understanding of the earlier works contributes to the comprehension of the later ones; and (3) they have a strong tendency in practice to concentrate on the garnering of information, whether that information be plot summaries and interpretations of literary works or explanations of cultural phenomena and trends. Since the goals of appreciating a heritage or culture are ordinarily so broadly stated that they might be appropriate to any number of courses, since the large number of works "covered" must almost of necessity be dealt with by means of "resumé," and since the nature of the courses (and the language of their descriptions) places emphasis on the recall of specific bits and pieces of information, curriculum makers must seriously examine their purposes in incorporating traditional chronological survey courses in their programs, even on an elective basis.

Genre Courses

The very fact that a course is limited by generic boundaries imposes certain goals on the course; otherwise, why would restrictions of genre be imposed? Obviously, a course limited to the short story must be concerned with the study of literary form. Otherwise it would be possible to include novels, poems, essays. In fact, about 80 percent of all the short story courses examined make clear statements about studying the short story as a literary form. A few of those also promise a historical survey of the form. In fact, 86 percent of the thirty-five short story courses emphasize structure, historical development, or both. In two cases it is not possible to tell what approach is intended. The remaining three course descriptions talk about reading short stories for sheer pleasure. Several of the "form" oriented courses make a point, usually in passing, about reading for pleasure and enjoyment. The idea seems to be that objectifying the formal craft of the writer contributes to the pleasure of reading.

One rather detailed outline for a course on the American short story states that "the materials studied in the course are designed to help the students develop a lasting appreciation of the short story as an art form." The course outline, which does not seem to be atypical, proceeds as follows:

I. Introduction of the short story.
   A. Characteristics of the short story.
   B. Short story as an art form.
   C. Read a short story as an example of above–"The Most Dangerous Game."

II. Analysis of the elements of the short story.
   A. Show filmstrip–"Elements of the Short Story."
   B. Elements: plot, theme, introduction, conclusion, setting, characterization, climax, conflict, mood.*

The students read several short stories, "analyzing" each for the various elements listed above. The following step calls for students to "write a short story, element by element." The program guide does not explain how the student should proceed in doing this, which element he should begin with, or how it is possible to "write one element" without the others. Two of the suggested classroom activities call for "reading short stories for enjoyment

*Interestingly, this list omits any mention of speaker or point of view.

and meaning" and "discussion of the story for meaning." Despite the mention of such activities, however, it is clear that the primary focus of this course, designated for "general" students, is on form. The program guide also lists an "Advanced Short Story" course which promises "an in-depth study of the short story as a literary form." As in many other program descriptions, the term *depth* remains unexplained.

Another program, while claiming that the "formal aspects of literature studied [short stories] will be considered only as they contribute to an understanding of the work under discussion," states that "the student will learn what makes a good story, who writes good stories, and how one can best enjoy the story." Two of the four course objectives clarify the emphasis: (1) "to aid students in determining what makes quality writing and who the quality writers are" and (2) "to acquaint students with literary terminology, forms, techniques, and styles of writing relevant to the understanding of character and theme."

Even in the few courses that seem to emphasize reading for pleasure, attention to form is unmistakable. For instance, one description states that the short story course is for the "kind of person who does not like to analyze literature objectively but can respond subjectively and who dislikes English in its traditional sense." However, " . . . some time will be spent in acquainting [the student] with how short stories are put together. . . . " The list of "elements" is there somewhere.

In general, the notion that one must be able to objectify the "elements" in order to "appreciate" the art of the short story is widespread. As one program guide put it, the "chief intent" of the short story course is "to offer the student a greater enjoyment in the reading of short stories by strengthening his knowledge of structure and techniques." Some programs take the notion even further, claiming that understanding is dependent on knowledge of the elements. One course description maintains that "the student will come to understand specific short stories by recognizing the function of the various elements and by understanding the relationship of these elements to each other in the whole construction." At best, the assumptions underlying both statements are questionable.

Of the courses on the novel, about 38.6 percent place a clear emphasis on understanding the "structure" or the historical development of the form. About 52 percent simply limit

themselves to novels, sometimes with geographical restrictions ("the American novel," "the continental novel," etc.). The remainder focus on either subgenres or thematic considerations. Presumably, most are concerned with increasing the student's power simply to read and interpret novels. But that must be presumed. Descriptions which promise to focus on "such well-known authors as Twain, Hawthorne, Steinbeck, Hemingway, and Faulkner"[23] or which claim to "study the structure and skills necessary for relating oneself to experiences of others"[24] are ambiguous. They may really focus on structure or simply on content, knowing what is *in* a particular novel, or how an author deals with a particular theme.

Although the emphasis on structure in novel courses is not so widespread as in short story courses, it is unmistakable. A typical objective, as phrased by one program guide, is to "recognize, define, and use the literary devices utilized in novels, for example, plot, characterization, setting, irony, satire, point of view, style, theme, protagonist, mood, tone, chronology, symbolism." The objective does not explain how the student will *use* these "devices," nor does it explain the difference between mood and tone or the sense in which chronology is a literary device. The course, by the way, is designed for "the student who likes to read, but is not a fast or discriminating reader."

Similar lists of "devices" or "characteristics" appear again and again in various program guides. Familiarity with these "characteristics" is apparently supposed to provide the student with the tools necessary for developing a "discriminating taste" and for recognizing "literature as a form of art." One program guide makes the connection fairly clear: "The objectives of this course are to study the elements of the novel and to develop in the student a set of criteria for personal value judgments." Another sets forth two "aesthetic and/or personal" objectives—to "appreciate the novel as an aesthetic experience" and to "evaluate literature as a humanistic entity."

The courses which provide a historical overview of the "development of the novel form" are frequently very ambitious. One program, for example, claims that "the novel as an art form will be explored from its inception with Richardson and Fielding to recently published novels. Representative works from different periods will be studied, including the realistic, naturalistic, stream of consciousness, and existentialist. English novels and foreign

works in translation will be contrasted."[25] Another program offering a historical approach sets the following objectives: to "describe differences in novelistic form between and among authors, periods, and countries of origin"; to "define the various genres of novels, including but not limited to philosophical, allegorical, psychological, picaresque, satirical"; to "define the novel as a literary form"; and, finally, to "demonstrate a fluent command of allegorical English."

Courses which make no clear statements about focusing on either the form or development of the novel tend to be collections of novels which students will study "in depth," relate to personal experience, or "enjoy." However, one has the impression that the program developers assume that enjoying the novel is dependent upon knowing the "characteristics" or "basic elements" of the novel.

When programs offer a course entitled "Introduction to the Novel," as well as other novel courses, the introductory course will ordinarily focus on aspects of structure, whereas the advanced courses will deal with the meaning of particular novels. For example, one program offers three different novel courses, each at a different phase level. The first course, labeled "phase 2," is "for the average student who needs an orientation to particular reading, writing, and speaking skills. . . . Phase 2 courses are designed to give students the basic skills they will need in approaching more sophisticated tasks at the upper grade levels."[26] Yet it is this course that deals with "basic characteristics of the novel—such as setting, mood, structure, characterization, and development of theme." The other courses, described as more difficult (phases 3 and 4-5) do not call for attention to structural characteristics. On the contrary, the phase 3 course is described as involving three novels in which "there is a strong element of suspense." The focus is on "issues, ideals, and problems that would be interesting to most high school students."[27] One would expect that the objectification of novel structure would be reserved for the students who have least difficulty in determining what the novel is about and that courses focusing on issues or ideals would be the "introductory" courses.

Nearly 67 percent of the literary drama courses (as opposed to play production courses) emphasize structure, historical development, or both. About 28.6 percent emphasize historical development of dramatic form, and about 54 percent emphasize structure.

One program guide, for example, promises to deal with "drama as a separate literary form of expression." A course in a second program "covers the reading and comparison of Greek plays as set down in Aristotle's *Poetics.*" More than one program, as in the case of courses on the short story and novel, lists the characteristics: "character development, sequence of action, presentation of theme, and setting."[28] In addition, some courses also examine the form of tragedy, comedy, realistic drama, etc., all in the same course. Several attend to such matters while developing a survey of "the evolving conventions and styles of drama," in one case "from Sophocles' *Antigone* to Beckett's *All That Fall.*" At least one program guide makes the notion of evolutionary development even more explicit. The course will "cover the evolution of the play as a literary form. It will begin with the earliest of known plays, a Greek drama, and continue through the present with representative plays from each major level of development."

As in the case of the novel, there seems to be a fairly widespread belief that objectification of dramatic form contributes to and must precede true appreciation of drama. Thus, the tendency to emphasize matters of structure in the introductory courses appears rather frequently. For example, one program guide announces that the course entitled "Introduction to Dramatic Literature" will "introduce and develop an understanding of the elements of dramatic literature (exposition, denouement, style, etc.)" and will "include discussion and *study* of some of the historically important trends and influences affecting drama." This course is regarded as so important that, along with three others (introductions to the novel, short story, and poetry), it is required of all students. A later course, "Studies in Short Plays," will attend to "dramatic structure and characterization" but will also encourage students to "examine the various themes and statements presented" and will include "oral interpretation and performance of scenes in class."

Only about 19 percent of the course descriptions for drama emphasize oral reading or acting scenes of plays in class. Perhaps that is simply because the courses in theater arts are expected to provide experience with live theater, but one might expect that, in courses concerned with the "basic characteristics" of the genre, more stress would be placed on live drama, at least to the extent of studio readings.

As with the short story, novel, and drama courses, the most widespread emphasis among the poetry courses is on aspects of structure, such as poetic devices (rhyme, rhythm, figurative language, and so forth), poetic forms, and internal structure. Only about 7.1 percent appear to deal with the historical development of poetry, and only 5.4 percent impose geographical restrictions on the poetry to be used. In about 23.2 percent of the descriptions the focus of the course is either not stated or not clear. In about 10.7 percent of the cases, the course emphasis seems to be clearly on the student's learning to deal with poetry on his own. Approximately 57 percent of the fifty-six poetry course descriptions also stress studying basic characteristics.

One course, for example, is planned as "a study of rhymes, rhythms, patterns of lines and stanzas, and figures of speech to find out what makes up the anatomy of a poem.[29] A description intended for students provides a hard sell approach: "Writing lyrics for your guitar, limericks, couplets, commercial jingles, serious verse, blank verse, nonsense poems are just some activities you can do when you join this class. Your professional skill will develop as you hear, read, and speak works of master poets and become acquainted with types of poetry, figures of speech, rhyme, and rhythm."[30]

It appears to be widely accepted that both understanding and appreciation of poetry must be based upon an "objective understanding of poetic elements." For example, one course is "designed to build an understanding of the poem through study of important elements and characteristics of poetry, poetic devices, and poetic forms."[31] Another program guide states the same case somewhat differently: "There are mechanics used in poetry as there are in anything that is constructed. The ideas are what *seem* to be in poetry, and the mechanics are what *are* in poetry." Still another program guide points out that "in order to recreate a poem as an aesthetic, sensuous, emotional, and intellectual experience, the reader needs to become aware of how a poem imparts this complex experience. Skills in analyzing the essential poetic elements–rhythm, imagery, sound, symbol, metaphor, and theme–and skills in comprehending the organization and integration of these various parts are not easily developed."

As in the case of other genres, there is a clear tendency in programs with more than one course in poetry to establish an "introductory" course which provides the primary focus on

structure and mechanics. One introductory course, for example, is "designed to study poetic style and form with emphasis on poetics, themes, and attitudes as reflected in the works of principal poets." A later course, called "Poetry for Pleasure" is described as a "course for those who already enjoy poetry and wish to become better acquainted with great poets. Emphasis [is] on oral reading and listening." In another program the introductory course focuses on "types of poetry" while the description of the advanced course states that "all kinds of poetry will be read and studied primarily for interest and thought stimulation."

Not all introductory courses in poetry focus on structure. The Ross Sheppard (Edmonton, Alberta) High School program, for example, offers a course called "Poet and Problem." The course is "designed to portray the poet as a member of society" whose "job is to delineate present and future problems and attempt to make others aware of them." The first four weeks of the course are devoted to discussion of how poetic images convey meaning. The course then turns to the "concept of theme as a poet's comment on a problem." During this phase of the course, students work in small groups, discussing the themes of a particular set of poems which they prepare to present and to explain to the class as a whole. The course then moves to various universal themes—love, war, man's relationship to others, and his struggle "to maintain an identity in the face of an impersonal world." The course also devotes time to "special problems of contemporary man" as they appear in poetry and to various other aspects of poetry. This course is unusual both for the emphasis it places on interpretation of meaning, as opposed to the objectification of structure, and for its organization, which provides for the students to do the interpreting.

Table 5 provides a summary of the various emphases in the generic courses. It is clear that structure receives the greatest attention, with 54 percent of all generic course descriptions making explicit statements about the study of various aspects of structure. Because structural considerations determine what kinds of works may be included in the course, it may well be that many more generic courses emphasize the study of formal characteristics and structure. Further, the belief that appreciation can be achieved only through an understanding of technique and structure appears to be widespread. If formal considerations are not the major concern of the generic courses, it is difficult to infer the

rationale for restricting a course to novels, poems, plays, or short stories. Yet not all the generic courses make a concern with formal characteristics explicit. At any rate, the generic courses are based on three assumptions which require investigation: (1) focus on a specific genre is the most effective means of demonstrating the formal characteristics of the genres; (2) appreciation is dependent upon knowledge of the formal characteristics of the genres; and (3) a fairly large percentage of high school students are sophisticated enough to benefit from and enjoy attention to formal characteristics at more than a superficial level.

TABLE 5. Emphases of Generic Courses in the Short Story, the Novel, Drama, and Poetry

Course	Percentages of Courses Providing One or More Emphases*				
	Structure	Historical Development	Geographical Limitation	Thematic	Not Evident
Short Story	80.0	8.6	8.6	–	14.3
Novel	35.0	10.5	35.0	8.8	21.0
Drama	54.0	28.6	12.7	–	17.5
Poetry	57.0	7.1	5.4	5.4	23.2
All Genres	54.0	14.7	16.1	3.8	19.4

The fact that a total of 211 courses focus on poetry, drama, the novel, or the short story and that an additional 28 focus on prose, nonfiction, and biography suggests the wide acceptance of the first assumption: focus on a particular genre is the best way to examine the formal characteristics of the genre. Only 30 courses are based upon mixed genres, yet for examining the restrictions and strengths of the various forms, the comparison of genres might provide insight far more effectively than the examination in isolation of one form. For example, if students examined a short story and considered the problems of dramatizing it, they would necessarily have to consider the problem of exposition through dialogue rather than by the narrator. They should see that, whereas fiction permits a writer to display a character's inner

*Some courses emphasize both structure and historical development. Others emphasize structure or historical development within a geographical limitation.

thoughts and responses to a very specific or perhaps unobservable stimulus, a modern dramatist must arrange events and actions so that the audience can observe the stimulus and infer the character's state of mind from his behavior. The comparison of a lyric poem and a short story with similar themes should demonstrate very clearly the relative compression of the first, the relative expansiveness of the second, and the different effects possible in each.

The examination of a single genre becomes most suspect when the various lists of elements to be examined are set side by side; plot, characterization, setting, symbol, irony, and theme appear as "basic elements" of each genre. Such repetition seems to violate the stricture formulated in program rationales about avoiding repetition. But the very fact that all those elements appear to some extent in course descriptions in every genre forces the question of the advisability of focusing on a particular genre—at least in the way it is currently done.

The assumption that appreciation is dependent upon knowledge of the formal characteristics of the genres also requires careful examination. At one level, no doubt, appreciation *is* dependent upon such knowledge. If we define appreciation as pleasure obtained in the perception, analysis, and reconstruction of the means a writer uses to achieve his effects, then clearly appreciation is dependent upon knowledge of the "elements," though what those elements are and how to define them are questions open to continuing debate. However, there are certainly other levels of "appreciation" which precede the high critical faculty. A good many people can appreciate, at some level, Mozart's fortieth symphony without knowing much about its "elements," internal structure, or "genre." Similarly, we can enjoy Brueghel's "The Wedding Feast" without being able to objectify his design or use of color. Although such relatively technical knowledge might well enable us to appreciate the symphony or the painting at multiple levels, there is little doubt that our more immediate responses are *not* dependent upon knowledge of formal characteristics.

Unfortunately, our notion of "appreciation" in the English curriculum has been singularly monolithic. Although elective programs have achieved a major breakthrough in establishing differentiated content and instruction, there is still a need to think in terms of different levels of appreciation. Students who have difficulty making the inferences which enable them to understand the implications of what happens in a literary work are unlikely to

derive much pleasure from a knowledge of formal characteristics. Yet those same students may be perfectly capable of identifying with a character, an image, or a situation to the extent of being moved to fear, anger, pity, or happiness. That ability involves a very basic level of appreciation which is not in the least dependent upon knowledge of formal characteristics. This leads to the third assumption, that a relatively high percentage of high school students are sophisticated enough to benefit from and enjoy attention to form. When attention is devoted to such things as formal characteristics, technique, historical development, and literary influences, the instructor almost necessarily assumes that his students can deal with the works themselves, that they can follow the plot and make inferences about character, about the relationships among characters, about the juxtaposition of scenes and events, about the implications of language and imagery, and so forth. If the instructor finds his assumptions about his students are wrong, he may revert to dealing with what happens in the novels and forget the more sophisticated problems. If he never discovers his error or if he does nothing about it, the course could easily be a disaster. The point is that when students cannot deal adequately with the substantive content of the works, there is little point in dealing with their formal characteristics. In such a case it is far more "basic" to teach so that students begin to interpret plot situations, images, and irony *for themselves.* Explaining such things does little to enhance the students' abilities as independent readers. The students must make their own interpretations. If the instructor finds that most of the course is devoted to substantive aspects of the works (as opposed to technique and form), he must seriously question the reasons for organizing the course on the basis of formal characteristics and distinctions in the first place.

Thematic Courses

The 201 thematic courses make up about 10.1 percent of all the courses and about 20 percent of the literature courses. Forty-three programs offer at least one thematic course. However, the bulk of the courses tend to be located in a few programs: seven programs (10 percent of the total) account for nearly 43 percent of all the thematic courses, and fourteen of the programs (20 percent of the total) account for over 62 percent of the thematic courses.

Twenty-seven programs offer no thematic courses, and twenty-nine offer between one and four.

The thematic *course* is one of the most innovative aspects of elective programs; in fact, after the abolition of a required English sequence, and after the establishment of the elective aspect of the programs, the thematically oriented course appears to be the most widespread, innovative instructional pattern. As we have seen, the patterns followed by many courses are not new but have evolved from traditional high school courses. While the idea of thematic courses is not especially new, the practice is. *An Experience Curriculum in English*[32] recommended the idea as long ago as 1935, and in the early sixties a number of the Project English Curriculum and Demonstration Centers[33] advocated thematic units. Nevertheless, they have apparently just begun to break into the genre/survey oriented high school literature curricula.

Unlike the genre and survey courses, the thematic courses are dominated by neither historical nor formal considerations. At the same time, they may integrate both or either when it is appropriate. Thus, a course built around utopian visions might very well arrange works chronologically, or it might begin with contemporary utopian and anti-utopian ideas and trace the roots of the ideas to their sources, reversing the chronology. It can easily incorporate a variety of forms: essays, poems, plays, short stories, novels, and philosophical works. One program stresses the use of art and music in a series of "humanities" courses. In addition, reading assignments can be readily differentiated. Some students might read and report on recent popular magazine articles about modern communes, others might do research on nineteenth century American utopian settlements, and still others might read sections of Plato's *Republic* or St. Augustine's *City of God*.

Perhaps the most important distinction between the thematic courses and the genre or survey courses is the kind of focus they provide for reading and discussion. While a course on the novel naturally focuses on formal characteristics, and while a survey course naturally emphasizes literary history, a thematic course focuses on the substance of the literary work, on what the author has to say and why he says it. One way to clarify the distinction is to convert course titles to the dominant problems they suggest. "English Literature: Beginnings to 1920" suggests a series of questions: Who wrote what, when? What were the major social,

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political, and literary influences on the works and writers? How and why did various literary forms develop? A generic course on the short story gives rise to a different set of questions: What are the characteristics of the short story as a literary form? What is the internal structure of a given short story? What techniques do writers use to create their effects? What are the various short story types? Questions such as these, as we have seen, are either implicit or explicit in the course designs. A course called "The Outcast," however, would be dominated by an entirely different order of questions that may be applied equally to literature or life: For what social and psychological reasons is a person ostracized? How does he respond to being ostracized? To what extent does the experience change him? How does he resolve the problem, internally and/or externally? Obviously, questions of a substantive nature can and should be raised in both survey and genre courses. Questions concerning history and form might be raised in a thematic course. The difference is one of inescapable emphasis.

An attempt to classify thematic courses in terms of their themes results in a few rather broad, overlapping categories which help to organize the various courses but which cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be used in a rigorous way. Nevertheless, most of the thematic courses fall into one of the following broad categories: values, the hero, the search for identity, social problems, and action and adventure.

In one sense, all literature is a study in values. One course, entitled "Values of Man," involves "master works from the Greeks to Faulkner and Eliot." The course is labeled "advanced placement" and is apparently no more a study of the "values of man" than any other course is. However, some courses (about 7 percent of the thematic courses) make an attempt to explore value sets and their development in a general sense. "Crisis and the Individual," for example, deals with "the various responses that individuals make to crises in their lives, crises that involve the ultimate human questions of moral choice," and includes a variety of readings, among them *The Brothers Karamazov, Don Quixote, King Lear,* and Shaw's *St. Joan.* A six-week course examines the optimist in a realistic world through *The Man of La Mancha* and *The Little Prince.* Another, entitled "Our Values in the Twentieth Century," is expected to examine "our modern day values and how they have developed and changed in the past seventy years" in nine weeks. The readings include *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* and

selections from *The Grapes of Wrath, The Greening of America,* and *The Pump House Gang.* Another course focusing on American literature is supposed to cover "the problems of good and evil, the struggle for equality and justice, and the nature of man"—all in one semester.

A small group of courses are even more broadly based. One is entitled "Man's Search for Meaning" and supposedly "explores man's search for meaning through a study of man's expressive works of the twentieth century to enable students to establish values for themselves. . . . Such topics as black humor, man and time, art and life, feeling and form are studied. . . ." Another course offered in the same program is entitled "Man in the Twentieth Century" and deals with such topics as "man, myth, and symbol, existentialism, the theater of the absurd, and man and ideology."

Several programs offer a course entitled "The American Dream," which generally presents a somewhat more specific focus than the "value" courses above. One typical course is described as an examination of "the ideals which led the Puritans across the sea, the philosophies of the American Revolution and the Constitution writers, the vision of the wilderness, of free land, of gold in California, the chimera of growth and industrialization in the Gilded Age, the dream turned nightmare in the cities, and the race for the stars." Other courses of this type attempt to examine American values and to explore what gave rise to and stimulated those values. But none places a much more specific limit on the conceptual content of the course than the one quoted above.

Courses focusing on the hero vary in difficulty and conceptual content from one program to another. The Burlington (Vermont) High School program offers a course for phase 4-5 students which is "designed to show that the lonely, misunderstood hero of today's best seller can trace his isolation, his frustration, and his courage to such heroes as Oedipus, Gawain, and other literary giants." The course lists as titles for class reading the *Odyssey, Oedipus, Beowulf, Samson Agonistes, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,* and selections from the *Canterbury Tales.* The Washington (South Bend, Indiana) High School program presents a much less ambitious course, still focusing on the "characteristics that make up a true hero" but providing "exciting and adventurous reading," including the *Odyssey, Shane, PT 109, The Guns of Navarone, On Her Majesty's Secret Service,* and *The Catcher in the Rye.*

While most programs offer only one course on the hero, if they offer any, a few offer a series of courses. The Nathan Hale (Tulsa, Oklahoma) High School program offers a series of six. Designed for a semester, the simplest course deals with "the hero of the West, the war hero, the spy and detective, the political and other modern day heroes, and the more recent anti-hero." The students will develop "their own concept of heroism and see how it compares with the concept of their classmates and the authors of books about heroism." Materials for examination include comic books, *Shane, To Hell and Back, The Untouchables, The Spies,* and *Profiles in Courage.* One emphasis of the course is the critical evaluation of concepts of heroism.

The remaining five courses are nine weeks each and include a course on the tragic hero, which begins "with Aristotle's definition" and covers *Oedipus, Antigone, Hamlet,* and *Death of a Salesman.* A course on the anti-hero also begins with the Aristotelian concept of the tragic hero and moves to "a discussion of the common man and what characteristics we expect modern heroes to have." Readings include *Dr. No, Goldfinger, The Outsiders, The Catcher in the Rye, A Separate Peace, Macbeth, Henry IV, Part I,* and *Richard III.* Two courses, divided chronologically, deal with American heroes and anti-heroes from 1780 to 1925 and from 1925 to 1955. The sixth course deals with European heroes of six types: the romantic, the idealist, the realist, the existentialist, the moralist, and the absurdist.

A fairly large group of thematic courses is built around the search for identity. Unfortunately, nearly all the descriptions are vague. Only a few are presented rather specifically. The Bridgewater-Raritan (New Jersey) High School course, called "The American Search for Identity," is described as follows:

> In literature, as in life, the individual searches for a particular answer to the universal question, "Who am I?" Thoreau sought an answer in the solitude of Walden Pond. His experience there produced two remarkable works, *Walden* and a highly controversial essay entitled "Civil Disobedience." Other authors have expressed their concepts of this search through the creation of fictional characters who are searching: the reaction of a young man who ran from his first battle in an American war, the courage of an old man struggling against defeat in an open boat on a shark-infested sea, and the refusal of a boy to accept his society's attitudes toward slavery. The readings in this course will center around this search for identity as it is depicted in American literature.

The course offered at Washington (South Bend, Indiana) High School focuses on "literature which revolves around such questions as 'What am I?' 'What is my place in the world?' 'How can I adjust to an adult world?' " The course is designed to provide an opportunity and "forum" for the discussion of such problems as they apply to the literature studied and to the students' own lives. The texts for the course include *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter, The Learning Tree, Fathers and Sons, Siddhartha, The Stranger, Walden* and "Civil Disobedience," and a collection of essays.[34] The course at New Trier (Winnetka, Illinois) High School focuses on five themes "inherent in the individual's search for identity"—self-definition, the search for individual meaning in a complex society, the unique character of an individual, response to the creative experience, and survival in society.

One large group of thematic courses has been developed around one or more social concerns, such as war, protest, justice, the minority experience, and man and politics. Several courses explore "the causes and effects of war as illustrated through the characters, events, and themes" of various literary works. One course lists *The Red Badge of Courage, All Quiet on the Western Front, Hiroshima, Fail-Safe,* and *On the Beach.* The South Bend (Indiana) Community Schools present a detailed outline for "War: A Universal Tragedy," with the following objectives: (1) to understand the universality of men's reaction to war; (2) to explore the different reactions of writers, cartoonists, and other artists comparing the hopes and fears of men in times of war; (3) to compare and contrast views of war in literature with those expressed in TV programs or popular commercial films; (4) to examine the role of poetry in war literature; (5) to compare and contrast literary styles and authors; and (6) to promote the realization that conflicts—be they individual and personal, national, ethnic, racial, or international—must be resolved by other means, if mankind is to survive. The course outline includes a variety of literary works: *Mother Courage, What Price Glory? All Quiet on the Western Front, They Were Expendable, Where is Viet Nam? For Whom the Bell Tolls,* and several poems from various anthologies. The suggested films include *The Yanks are Coming, Victory at Sea, Hiroshima-Nagasaki,* and *Night and Fog.* The outline suggests that students collect songs, poems, and essays that reflect various attitudes toward war for use in class.[35]

Courses focusing on protest vary from one dealing with nonviolent protest movements to those dealing with the literature

of protest. A few provide a survey of protest literature in an attempt to demonstrate that "history has never been without its articulate rebels." Among the authors to be studied in the Nicolet (Milwaukee) High School course are Socrates, Jefferson, Thoreau, Twain, Sinclair, Gandhi, Steinbeck, King, Vonnegut, and Dylan. Two major objectives of the course involve the interpretation and evaluation of "protest as expressed in various types of literature, including poetry, drama, essays, films, short stories, novels, and biographies." In addition, students are asked to write protests using the techniques studied in the course.

Closely related to courses on protest are courses that deal with the minority experience in America, making use of a variety of materials to examine the character and quality of the "outsider's life" in our society. One course in the South Bend (Indiana) High Schools program, designed specifically to attend to the nature of prejudice, makes use of easy reading materials, including Scholastic's *Prejudice* unit and Holt, Rinehart and Winston's *Conflict, A Patch of Blue* or *Raisin in the Sun,* and *Two Blocks Apart.* Among the films listed for the course are *Hangman, Martin Luther King, Boundary Lines, Picture in Your Mind, The Dot and the Line,* and *Black History: Lost, Strayed, Stolen.* The course is designed to increase the student's intellectual understanding of prejudice, to increase his "capacity for understanding the feelings and actions of others," "to help him better understand his own feelings and actions," and "to improve basic language arts skills through reading, writing, and speaking assignments." Students apply three key questions to their own experience and to the readings and films: "What is prejudice?" "How does prejudice affect people?" and "What should be done about prejudice?"[36]

Other courses deal with a series of social problems. For example, the Spanish Fork (Utah) High Schools program includes a course called "Modern Social Problems," which deals with a series of themes entitled "Rebels and Regulars," "Law vs. Conscience," "Living with Technology," "Is Man a Savage?" and "Wear Someone Else's Shoes." Each unit in the course focuses on various works, including *Antigone,* "Civil Disobedience," *Hiroshima, Lord of the Flies, The Chosen,* and *Raisin in the Sun.*

The thematic courses in the final large group focus on action and adventure and are usually intended either for students who are not interested in reading or who are weak readers. Generally, the courses use books in the following categories: sports, westerns,

mysteries, war stories, spy stories, and science fiction. The emphasis is on the reader's identification with the hero and on obtaining a pleasurable vicarious experience. Intellectual analysis, except for the easiest kind, appears to be generally excluded from most such courses. One course, for example, is "designed to introduce students to the exciting literature of adventure and will emphasize true stories of adventure and exploration." The course is labeled "phase 1-2." Some courses designed for a similar audience focus on only one of the kinds of adventures listed, the most popular being mysteries and westerns. Unfortunately, there are not many courses designed for weaker readers and writers. Courses such as these, *perhaps* with more attention to cognitive goals, need to be more widely adopted. Weaker readers deserve the added attention.

Courses focusing on sports tend to have a similar emphasis. A few, however, seem to have little or no connection with English. One course description, for example, explains that the course "was devised because more and more people of all ages are becoming interested in sports. It will attempt to acquaint students with all the aspects of major sports–baseball, football, hockey, basketball, and soccer. Minor sports will also be included." The description explains that "representative personalities . . . will discuss their sport and answer questions." Apparently, the main purpose of the course is to explain the rules, techniques, and mechanics of the sports.

Not all sports courses have this focus. A course at O.L. Smith (Dearborn, Michigan) Junior High School includes reading a variety of books about sports, examining newspaper coverage, and writing sports stories about the games themselves, the players, and specific contests. Another course, called "The Literature of Sports," at Burbank (California) Senior High School involves both reading and writing and has a strong analytical emphasis. The course is so unusual and thoughtful, clearly demonstrating the versatility possible in English, that it is worth examining in detail:

> "The Literature of Sports" is designed to help students analyze a field they are familiar with and frequently expert in. The basic aims of the course are, as with any English course in the curriculum, clear understanding of reading matter and clear expression of thought, both orally and in writing. Additionally, the course is to force students to deal with the deeper meaning of athletics and sports as a major force in American society and to seek answers to complex and controversial

> questions: Is it true that "good guys" come in last? What are the pressures and demands on amateur and professional athletes? What are the rewards? What are the goals that lead men and women to careers in athletics? What effect does their profession have on their value systems? Who really runs athletics? Are "games" for fun or for money? What is the relationship between athletics and an education? What happens to old athletes? What role does athletics play in the world, especially among the major political and military powers? Who are the others who live off athletes? What is and what should be the role of the sports journalist, the sports promoter, and the sports officials? What are the ethics of American sports? What should they be? What leads men to climb mountains? Why do men love speed? Why do people want to watch others? Why have they killed over sports events?
>
> Through reading, writing, discussion, reports, and research, as well as through as much contact as possible with those involved in athletics in interviews and guest talks. the student should emerge with a clearer picture of sports in general and of the relationship between life and literature.

The questions presented above are the kind that can promote considerable debate among students, prepare them for future reading assignments, and sustain interest in analysis. To facilitate the analyses suggested by the questions, the course is divided into six areas: the psychology of competition, the value system of athletics, the social implications of sports, sports as business, the role of the spectator, and the sportsman alone. Each section involves various reading materials from *Action: An Anthology of Writing about Sports, Instant Replay*, or various magazines and newspapers. A variety of writing assignments derive from the particular problems under consideration.

Some may consider this a non-English course. However, the course is likely to appeal to students whose interest in more conventional English has long since been destroyed, to involve them in debate, to induce them to examine questions acutely, to challenge their generalizations and clichés, and to engineer greater precision in the use of language generally. Even without the reading and writing, it should qualify as an English course.

This course on the literature of sports is a clear example of the essential nature of thematic or problem-centered courses—their focus on substantive problems as opposed to structural or formal characteristics and questions of literary history. Such courses have a degree of flexibility not available to conventional literary courses. The theme or problem itself can be varied to increase or decrease the complexity of the questions with which students deal, and the works read can be selected both for their literal

difficulty and for the level and complexity of inference necessary to deal with them adequately. Chronological surveys and generic courses are much more limited in this respect.

There are at least three important problems related to the development of thematic or problem courses. First, the extremely broad focus of some courses (e.g., "The Nature of Man") suggests profundity but actually promises superficiality. A course dealing with particular views of the nature of man can readily be developed. "Culture, Conditioning, and Moral Responsibility," for example, might focus on various twentieth century views of man's control over himself and his environment and might include various philosophical, anthropological, and literary writings—a "humanties" course. Second, there seems to be a tendency in some courses to stress the need to develop certain attitudes in the student at the expense of developing the student's power to deal with new situations and problems independently. While the development of certain attitudes may be defensible, the importance of a student's becoming an independent learner who no longer needs a school and who can deal with new problems is undeniable. Third, the selection of particular thematic courses for a given curriculum appears to be almost a matter of guesswork. Three program directors reported listing possible titles and then eliminating those that the teachers felt would not work. At least the course ideas that survive are ones that teachers believe will appeal to students. But *many* thematic ideas will appeal to students. The problem comes in deciding which of the many will be most conducive to the ends of the program.

Bible and Mythology Courses

Twenty-one programs have courses on the *Bible* as literature. Most seem to be offered because of the influence the *Bible* has had on literature and art as "a source of literary forms and allusions." One course lists several biblical forms for study: allegories, history, dramas, stories, parables, songs, letters, and oratory, another focuses on "the relationship between content and form" in biblical literature and on the influence of the *Bible* on English and American literature; and another, on the analysis of biblical style. The course descriptions do not explain what parts of the *Bible* will be used or how. Nor do they explain how they will demonstrate the use of the *Bible* as a "source of allusion" and an influence on literature and art.

Thirty-five programs offer a total of forty-seven courses in mythology. Nearly all suggest that learning the content of the Greek myths (several also include myths from other parts of the

world) is important for understanding literary allusions. Most also hold that a study of myth will show "how man has used his imagination to help him face the cruelty, indifference, and mysteries of his world." Several mention the "relevance of myth to modern man."

> Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix—mythological characters—Woodstock and *Easy Rider*—mythological experiences showing characters searching for meaning as Ulysses or one of King Arthur's knights might have done. This course will show you how such modern idols as Joplin and Hendrix qualify as mythological characters by explaining what it takes to become a myth. The course is also designed to make you aware of the part that the myth has played in man's development in literature and in art (even in commercials!). Through reading about myths and how myths came about, you will be able to see that many of the problems that mythological man encounters are similar to the problems of today's youth who are seeking to find their identity.

The term *myth,* of course, has come to be used very loosely. We talk about the myth of the American West, the myth of Abraham Lincoln, or the myth of Janis Joplin and mean either the layer of tales and ideas or the special, illusory significance that has become associated with a person or a place. The sense in which Janis Joplin is a myth, however, is quite different from the sense in which the stóry of Perseus is a myth. For one thing, their origins are entirely different; for another, their psychological significances have little in common.

Apart from the etiological myths, most courses seem to ignore the origins and functions of myth. A few claim to "focus attention upon the origins, meanings, and influences of folklore [myths, legends, and folktales] on language, literature, and the arts." However, sentences like "Much time will be given to word study and the interpretation of quotations in literature" betray the real purpose of the course. Another course promises to be an examination of "how . . . in some old tales and myths, man creates an explanation of or a reason for the seasons, for night and day, and so on." If such myths as the story of Persephone are simply considered as etiological myths, they lose much of their significance.

Several courses emphasize a comparative study of myths. One course, which involves reading "the mythology of Greece, Rome, India, China, Japan, and the American Indian" lists the following objectives: (1) to analyze the basic mythology of each culture,

especially the creation, destruction, and Fall from Paradise stories; (2) to compare and contrast the ideas for each culture as expressed through the mythology; (3) to trace the elemental relationships found in the mythology to show similarities existing in different cultures; and (4) to develop understanding for other cultures. Another course, the East Christian (Grand Rapids, Michigan) High School course on myth, emphasizes a comparative study of Greek myths in a cumulative series of objectives: (1) to demonstrate familiarity with a large number of the classical myths; (2) to express the significance of particular myths; (3) to abstract similarities between myths; (4) to make conclusions about the Greek view of man (his cultural hero), the world, and history (the gods or forces determining it), as compared to the Christian view; and (5) to evaluate the purpose and meaning of myths and myth-making in the life of man.

This attempt to draw conclusions about the Greek world-view and to compare it with the world-view implicit in another tradition seems worthwhile. The Burbank (California) High School program offers a comparative course, using Padraic Colum's *Orpheus: Myths of the World* as a central text. The course concentrates on reading and comparing a variety of myths, "defining elements common to most myths," "identifying qualities of major heroes of world myth and folklore," "comparing and contrasting several different mythologies of similar nature," and culminating in a collateral independent project such as "reading and reporting on some aspect of a full-length work," a "detailed comparison of two mythologies," or "writing an 'original myth.' "

The Ross Sheppard (Edmonton, Alberta) High School program offers two courses on myth. The first is similar in several respects to those already described. The second, an advanced course, is unique in its emphasis on the literary uses of myth and mythic patterns and on myth criticism. The students enrolled are expected to have "a good background of myths and legends" and to "be proficient in English skills and abilities." The course examines three types of contemporary novels: "historical adventure stories *set in the period of ancient myths,*" "novels which retell ancient myths and legends," and "myth-based novels" in which the "myth is basic but not apparent." The course description lists four works as reference material: Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism, Fables of Identity,* and *Myth and Symbol,*

and *Myth and Literature,* edited by John B. Vickery.

The Concord (Mt. Diablo, California) High School program offers a course in myth which has clearly been informed by contemporary thinking and scholarship on mythology. The course emphasizes "the original conception and evolution of a culture's perception of its world" and conceives of "myth as a cultural expression of a people." As such, it is more concerned with "how gods are born and die than in their familial relationships and supposed deeds." Four of the eight objectives illustrate the general tenor of the course and suggest conceptual frames that might be useful in any course:

1. The student should be aware of a variety of myths, such as: cosmogonic myths, or the ordering of Chaos into the cosmos; myths of renewal, or a return to the "strong time" before decay and deterioration set in; myths of eschatology, myths that tell of the world's submergence under water and apocalyptic syndromes leading to the millenium.
2. The student should understand the functions of a mythology, that is, see that a myth reveals models for human rites and significant activities; that a mythology allows an individual to fulfill the universal need of feeling part of something larger than himself, whether it be on the religious level with the individual in contact with the primordial penetration of the natural by the supernatural, or cultural membership in a tribe, city-state, or nation.
3. The student should see the life patterns of the epic and legendary hero. For example, the hero experiences an insecure youth, he conquers a chaos-monster, consummates a sacred marriage, and rules as a king. The student should see the variations in this pattern through learning the stories of Hercules, Perseus, Jason, Theseus, Odysseus, Beowulf, King Arthur, Roland, El Cid, etc., and should be able to compare epic heroes to contemporary heroes and anti-heroes.
4. The student should be aware that mythology is not dead, but new mythologies are being created and old ones survive in vestigial and camouflaged ways: eschatological ideas are found in millenium movements such as Nazi Socialism, Communism, and in our own New Deal, New Frontier, and the Great Society; the destruction of old art forms and the creation of new ones (theater of the absurd and modern art). He should see depth psychoanalysis as an analogue to a myth of renewal or a return to origins.

While the course guide does not explain how these concepts will be taught, most can be taught through an inductive, comparative analysis of myths and various cultural phenomena or by student

esearch and report. The course, in short, need not be dominated by teacher lecture.*

Minor Genre Courses

The term "minor genre courses" is used here to distinguish it from the generic courses discussed previously. The word *genre* here refers to the kinds of genres described by Aristotle in the *Poetics:* epic, tragedy, and comedy. These genres have not only formal characteristics but thematic ones in common. Among the many courses examined, only six focus on tragedy, four on comedy, and six on satire. Two deal with the characteristics of the Gothic or "horror" novel, nine with the detective or mystery novel, and one with the adventure novel. Most of these include analysis of the characteristics of the genre, but those on the detective, Gothic, and adventure novels place greatest emphasis on reading for excitement.

The most frequently offered course of this type is science fiction, with twenty-five programs offering a total of twenty-eight courses. About half of the courses present a historical survey of science fiction writing, beginning with some point in the past and moving to modern writers. One course begins with the "ancient myths," another with Hawthorne, and another with H.G. Wells. One course description claims to be "a chronological sampling of science fiction from the late seventeenth century to the twentieth century." The earliest work listed for the course is *Frankenstein.* Another course, in addition to the usual science fiction, indicates that stories by Hawthorne, Poe, and Mark Twain will be used.

Science fiction is ordinarily based on extrapolation from accepted scientific observations, discoveries, and principles. Accordingly, some courses, such as the one at Elk Grove (California) High School, "emphasize the relationship of such writing to current scientific ideas." A course at Columbia (Richland, Washington) High School "centers on the theme of man's image of himself in the future as he faces the implications of the revolutionary scientific and technological changes of the present

*Teachers interested in designing courses on mythology will find the following useful: *The Uses of Myth,* edited by Paul A. Olson (Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1968). The book examines the nature of myth and the uses of myths in the schools and contains a short, useful bibliography of books about myth.

and near future." The readings in this course "include scientific, philosophic, moral, and religious literature, as well as science fiction, utopian, and anti-utopian selections." A few courses probe the moral implications of scientific and technological change. The Burbank (California) Senior High School course stresses examination of "the values, assumptions, and goals of man as he relates to the universe." Another course examines the way in which science fiction writers "use the future to warn us about our present problems."

The Concord (Mt. Diablo, California) High School course is one which involves the examination of both extrapolation and the moral implications of technological change. The course is described as dealing with "scientific hypotheses, concepts of time and space, and the conventions of science fiction, as well as the sociological and psychological assumptions about life made by the author." Some of the objectives for the students indicate the conceptual content of the course: (1) "to identify the social problems in the literature and to relate these problems to contemporary society"; (2) "to identify the conventions of science fiction"; (3) "to formulate criteria upon which he [the student] can make judgments about works of this genre"; (4) "to formulate . . . extrapolations"; and (5) "to identify social criticism and its merits."

Although it appears that most of these courses deal with both the formal characteristics and the content of science fiction, a few seem to make no discrimination between science fiction and other literature of adventure. Most courses stress reading for pleasure, and a few incorporate instruction in basic skills. As the Burbank (California) Senior High School course description puts it, "above all, through science fiction literature, we are trying to arouse enthusiasm in the student for the art of communication (reading, writing, or discussing) and a desire to think and react to what is being read and what is going on in the student's life. Along the way, he may come to a fuller appreciation of some of the exciting aspects of the English language (vocabulary, figurative language, literary devices, style) and an understanding of what constitutes quality literature, in addition to a confidence in his ability to research facts, exercise imagination, and practice communication. . . ."

Black and Ethnic Literature Courses

Comparatively few programs (19) offer courses in black literature and even fewer (10) in ethnic literature. Nevertheless, there is considerable evidence that works by black writers have been included in other courses–one American literature survey which includes only eight full length works includes both *Native Son* and *Raisin in the Sun*. The courses described earlier on "The Minority Experience in America" and "Prejudice" include several works by black writers. Thematic courses having to do with alienation, social problems, and justice invariably include works by black writers. The courses under consideration here, however, deal exclusively with black or ethnic literature and presumably have been devised to study the special characteristics and content of that literature.

A course at Madison (Mansfield, Ohio) High School is typical of the ethnic literature courses. The course is intended to bring students into contact with "the literary contributions of the diverse groups that make up America's society." This nine-week course devotes three weeks to black literature, two to American Indian literature, and two to Chinese, Mexican-American, and Puerto Rican literature. The course entitled "Literature of Minority Groups in America" at Nicolet (Milwaukee) High School features literary works by "blacks, Indians, Jews, and Mexican-Americans" and lists the following as major writers to be included in the course: Malamud, Potok, Wiesel, Momaday, Deloria, Hughes, Ellison, Wright, Baldwin, Brooks, Jones, Salas, and Chavez.

Courses in black literature appear to be of two main types. Some are surveys of the development of black literature in America. The course at Niles Township West (Illinois) High School begins with Douglass, Dunbar, and W.E.B. Du Bois and moves to the Harlem Renaissance, the depression, and contemporary literature. In addition to many selections from two anthologies of black literature, the students read *The Invisible Man, Another Country, No Place to Be Somebody*, and *Soul on Ice*.

Courses in black literature which are not surveys tend to be collections of works selected to reveal "the problems faced by the black man in America." One course, for example, is described as "an examination of the literature of the Negro, literature which exposes his dreams, his trials and sorrows, his long journey toward

being recognized as a man of stature and worth in Western society." The problems faced by blacks, of course, are not exclusively black. In a very real sense, they are white problems. It would seem that most courses recognize that. As one description admonishes students, black literature is "a course for both *blacks* and *whites*. . . . If you want to better know *who you are*, take this course."

Although some attention has been paid to black and other minority literatures in a few programs, there is a need for expanding such offerings. And while courses specializing in black and minority literature help to fill the gap, program designers might well incorporate more works by minority writers into the other course offerings.*

Language Courses

The courses in this group are those that have language as their special field of inquiry. Their focuses can be divided into three main groups: general language, modern grammar, and traditional school grammar and mechanics. Some other types of courses are related to these three, especially the last: business English courses almost inevitably have a strong grammar and usage component—frequently called a review; some communications courses deal with such topics as semantics and logic; and, of course, many literature courses include the interpretation of "figurative language and literary devices." In addition, a few miscellaneous courses focus on rather odd subjects, such as "Latin for English Enrichment." As already noted, however, the number of courses taking language as their peculiar province is rather small—only sixty-five (about 3.2 percent of the total number of courses). Forty-two of the seventy programs have one or more courses in this category.

Of the twenty-four courses in the first group, general language, ten focus totally or in part on the history of the English language. Such a course is typically described as tracing "the origins and development of the English language from the Anglo-Saxon period

*Teachers interested in designing a course in black literature or in finding materials to incorporate in other courses will find the following useful: *Theory and Practice in the Teaching of Literature by Afro-Americans*, by Darwin T. Turner and Barbara Dodds Stanford (Urbana, Illinois: NCTE/ERIC Clearinghouse on the Teaching of English, 1971).

to the present" and noting "the influence that various languages have had on the vocabulary and pronunciation of our language." The courses make use of various literary selections to illustrate the changes in English. Several of them also examine American dialects and "the factors affecting American speech." One course deals exclusively with American dialects—"how language differences have developed; the various dialects each person speaks daily; how new words are added to our language; the development of slang, etc."[37]

With the exception of one course on semantics, the remainder of the general language courses focus on broader aspects of language, its nature, social function, psychological effects, and so forth. One such course, at Concord (Mt. Diablo, California) High School, has already been described. The Trenton (Michigan) High School course, "Language and Human Behavior," while including some work on the history of language, deals with many aspects of language. The course is divided into five sections: language and civilization, history of the English language, the structure and use of English, semantics, and the literary uses of language.

The first section provides an introduction to language, examining first the possible ways of looking at language, then considering "language as a system having a purpose, based on underlying assumptions, granting rights, imposing restrictions, assigning roles, all of which operate within certain observable rules." In addition, students examine the difference between "symbol and referent; between language and reality."[38] The section on the history of the English language considers various theories of how language originated, how language families develop, the kinds of changes that English has undergone, semantic changes, and specific historical developments in the English language. The third section, the structure and use of English, begins with an introduction to the problem of correctness as a means of examining the assumptions and development of traditional grammar. This is followed by a brief examination of structural and transformational grammar and the assumptions upon which they are based. The remainder of this section deals with such topics as dialects, levels of usage, and the function of dictionaries. The semantics section deals with the "connotative values of language," the "process of classification, which typically involves the application of value judgments," the "difficulty of matching words and reality," "two-valued thinking," and so forth.

The last section explores the figurative, symbolic, and ritualistic uses of language.[39]

Only eleven of the courses deal primarily with structural or transformational grammar, but some of those also include some emphasis on dialect and the history of language, and some of the others deal briefly with modern grammar, as does the Trenton course. It is interesting to note that with all the emphasis on linguistics in professional meetings and publications over the past ten or twelve years, there are so few courses devoted to "modern" grammar and nearly three times as many to traditional school grammar and usage.

Although only thirty courses deal with traditional school grammar and usage, a number of other courses devote some time to these areas. Business English, "practical" English, and some of the "basic" composition courses typically devote considerable attention to grammar and usage. Ordinarily such study is believed to make a direct contribution to writing skills. In fact, knowledge of "sentence structure" is often conceived of as a writing "skill." For example, a course entitled "Grammar: Prescriptive and Descriptive" is described as follows: "Students will write sentences and short paragraphs. They will learn to identify constructions, to distinguish between sentences and clauses and phrases, to subordinate or emphasize an idea, to express ideas in parallel constructions, to recognize and correct ambiguities, to recognize and eliminate wordiness and dangling modifiers, and to insure coherence."[40] Another course, entitled "Grammar, Usage, and Writing," includes "the study of basic parts of speech, sentence structure, usage, punctuation, expansion and reduction of sentences to improve writing style."[41] Such grammatical "elements" are usually viewed as inherently connected with good writing, and often grammar and usage is a prerequisite for composition courses. Even more frequently, the required courses preceding the elective program (at seventh, ninth, tenth, or eleventh grade levels, depending on when the elective program begins) emphasize "a review of essentials" to prepare for the electives.

Closely related to the "basic grammar" courses in many ways are the business English courses. One is designed to develop "accuracy in spelling, punctuation, and rhetoric." Another is designed for "students who desire to improve in the area of English grammar, usage, and style." In addition to learning to

write a series of "business communications," students are given "opportunities for oral presentation and demonstration" which "will improve not only the students' command of English usage, but also the utilization of practical business psychology, which these potential stenographers must utilize in their highly professional secretarial careers."

A few programs present several language courses. Two or three manage to include a modern grammar course along with one of the most traditional kind. Some include a course on the history of the language and various grammar courses. One program, for example, in addition to two business English courses which stress grammar, usage, and mechanics, offers three language courses. The first, entitled "Grammar and Composition Review," emphasizes "skill in communicating by means of the written word." The description goes on to explain that "skill in composition is developed through sentence structure, paragraphing, oral and written composition, correct usage, punctuation, spelling, and vocabulary." The second, "Latin for English Enrichment," places "special emphasis on vocabulary development through the structural analysis of the Latin root, prefix, and suffix of English words." In addition, "Latin sentence structure will be studied to increase the understanding of language pattern importance." The third course, "Linguistics," deals with the history of the language, semantics, and transformational grammar, which "helps students write sentences of greater structural complexity without loss of grammatical quality." Linguists should ponder what they have wrought.

Composition Courses

Generally the composition courses are of two types: utilitarian writing and creative writing. In addition, some of the courses dealing with research and some of those in the category of practical or vocational English include instruction in composition. Many of the literature courses require analytical papers and other kinds of writing, but as a rule, the course descriptions do not provide for instruction or preparatory activity before the student writes. The practice, revealed in descriptions by and conversations with teachers and curriculum planners, is to confine formal instruction in composition to the composition courses and to minimize prewriting activity and direct composition instruction in

the other courses. Presumably English teachers mark the papers their students write in non-composition classes. But marking is not a very effective means of instruction.

Fifty-seven of the programs offer 111 courses in what might best be called utilitarian writing, courses which emphasize writing directions, filling out forms, developing a thesis, developing a paragraph, or learning the old quadrivium—description, narration, argumentation, and exposition. The forms emphasized in these courses are not belletristic, except for an occasional venture into the short story in one or two courses and into personal writing (letters, diaries, journals, personal responses, etc.) for the purpose of developing "clear and effective" expression. Six programs do not indicate the specific lines of development which the courses follow, and four offer only an advanced course which focuses on the writing of critical or research papers. Of the remaining forty-seven programs, thirty-five base the development of the utilitarian courses, to some extent, on the notion that students must learn to write sentences before paragraphs and paragraphs before longer compositions. Twenty of the programs make complete or partial use of the traditional distinctions among description, narration, argumentation, and exposition. Twenty-six programs offer thirty "advanced composition" courses, which typically emphasize the "refining of basic skills," the study of logic and organization, the development of style, and, almost inevitably, the writing of a research paper—with documentation. Twenty-eight programs provide thirty courses designed to teach the skills of library research, but not all of them involve writing. Some simply require the student to present his findings to the class, which, of course, requires composing of a nonwritten kind.

Some years ago, one panel speaker at a local English teachers' meeting explained the new composition program at his school. It was a straightforward sequential program. The ninth grade was devoted to the sentence, the tenth grade to the paragraph, the eleventh grade to the five hundred word theme, and the twelfth grade to (you guessed it!) the one thousand word theme. None of the programs in this study have simplified the approach (which will be called the sentence-paragraph assumption for brevity) to that extent, but the main outlines are evident.

In one program, the outline for a "basic" course includes four major headings, of which "Sentence Writing" is one. The subheadings for sentence writing are grammar, sentence writing,

and organization of ideas. Obviously, sentence writing is regarded as an important part of the course and a basic necessity for composition. The study of sentence structure, through the medium of grammar, is supposed to help the student gain the competence necessary to move to the level of paragraph writing. The next course in the sequence "is designed to teach the student the fundamentals of good paragraph construction." More specifically, the course provides for "writing strong, interesting topic sentences and developing these topic sentences, paying close attention to unity, order, and coherence." Naturally, the students study and use the "various types of development." The description of the third course states that "the so-called theme will be studied, evaluated, and practiced." This advanced course also provides instruction in the "researching and writing of longer papers."

In another program the easiest course, called "Applied English," is "aimed primarily at the practical writing expected in one's job or in other everyday matters." "Basic Writing" is a course in "paragraph building, stressing the clear and logical development of a single idea within this structure." "Composition I" is intended to "develop basic writing skills in narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive types of expression." In this course "the stress will be on the organization and effectiveness of the content." "Composition II" is the course that "will cover the total writing experience from the beginning thought processes to the final writing of the complete composition." Assignments will be in the areas of "critical analysis, forceful argument, effective persuasion, and clear explanation." The "Advanced Composition" course will "cover the seven basic types of theme writing and in-depth studies into critical analysis and research." The nature of the "seven basic types" is not indicated.

In a third program the basic writing course involves "the techniques used in writing complete and meaningful sentences, modifying and qualifying ideas." ("Basic grammar" is a prerequisite for this course.) Two courses intended for students not planning to go to college involve "various kinds of practical compositions." The next course moves into the area of "basic paragraph development expanded into essay writing."

In some programs, the sentence-paragraph assumption is telescoped into a single course. For example, one course which is planned "for students who definitely intend to go to college and

who have specific problems with writing . . . will include the writing of paragraphs, longer compositions, and [will] culminate with a research paper." The description indicates that "individual attention will be given in areas of sentence structure, punctuation, transition, and grammar." In another program, a course for weak college bound students provides a review of "writing problems of a more elementary sort—sentence integrity, topic sentences, [and] paragraphing," followed by "emphasis, . . . eventually, . . . on structuring the entire composition. . . . " Further examples are not necessary. These are typical of the thirty-five programs in this category. There is evidence that if course descriptions were more complete, the number would be even greater.

The assumptions underlying the typical sentence-paragraph-theme sequence are open to serious dispute. In a sense this approach to composition has much in common with the way in which a behaviorist would divide what is to be learned into its component parts. Presumably, he too would work toward the child's mastery of letter forms before proceeding to spelling, and the spelling of words before proceeding to sentences, sentences before proceeding to paragraphs, and so forth. This instructional practice suggests that composing is a matter of forming strings of letters which become words, strings of words which become sentences, strings of sentences which become paragraphs, and strings of paragraphs which become "full" compositions, as though each component were independent of the others. However, such a model does not seem to be an adequate representation of what actually happens in the composing process. As Bernard J. McCabe has argued, "A person writing a particular [alphabetic] letter is not simply producing an element of a word; rather, he produces a part of a word, a sentence, a paragraph, and a longer composition—all of these at once. This implies that the formation of even a single letter strongly suggests preliminary formulation of the whole composition as a gestalt toward which the successive production of strings of words, sentences, paragraphs, and so forth, moves." If a student, then, has difficulty with "parts" of the composition, McCabe continues, "his problem is not primarily one of inadequate association of part to part, but rather of an inadequately developed gestalt of the complete composition. It follows, then, that the instructional work in composition is best developed with longer composition units as opposed to working toward a mastery of their smaller subordinate components." [42]

This does not imply that spelling, punctuation, and other mechanical matters should be ignored. They can be dealt with in the context of working with the whole composition, rather than as a prelude to it.

A second traditional approach to composition, that which divides all composition into four parts, is also present in a fairly substantial number of the programs. At least twenty make use of the traditional distinctions among exposition, description, narration, and argumentation, or between two or more of these types. Ordinarily, instruction in these appears in intermediate or advanced courses. Sometimes, attention to them appears in conjunction with paragraph writing. Thus, one course description states that students will have "the opportunity to express [their] thoughts in paragraphs of description, narration, and exposition." A course for college bound students is designed to help the student "become competent at writing essays" of the "argumentative, expository, descriptive, and narrative" types. One course description expands the types to include "critical," "evaluative," and "process" compositions in addition to the others.

Advanced composition courses are nearly always designed for college bound students or, at least, recommended to them. Ordinarily, these courses, which appear in twenty-six programs, emphasize attention to logic, organization, style, and the techniques of research and documentation. One course, "recommended for success in the arts and sciences division of universities," emphasizes "research techniques, writing the research paper, the development and presentation of documented and critical papers, and the personal essay."[43] Another course, in a different program, includes "practice in writing the precis, summary, and paraphrase, as well as a systematic study of the steps leading toward the completion of the research paper." In a third program, the advanced composition course attends to "the synopsis, the critical review, the precis, the research paper, and the short story."[44]

The thirty courses which concentrate on research vary slightly from program to program. The Burbank (California) High School course is entitled "Reference Skills" and appropriately devotes considerable time to learning about the organization of the library and the use of various reference sources, including dictionaries, encyclopedias, atlases, gazetteers, bibliographies, and indexes. Another section of the course is devoted to a sequence of activities, apparently conventional in several programs, designed to

produce a research paper: developing a bibliography, taking notes, developing a thesis and general outline, and writing the rough draft and the final paper. The Trenton (Michigan) High School course places less emphasis on instruction in reference skills and more on writing the papers. A "practice paper" based on a casebook is assigned to help students develop techniques for writing a paper. The last eight weeks are devoted to a longer, library research paper. The papers are criticized, seminar fashion, by all the students in the course.

About 90 percent of all the utilitarian writing courses are within the compass of the course types described above. They are formulated on the sentence-paragraph assumption, the four types of writing, or the advanced composition syndrome, which includes specific types of writing, attention to logic and style, and research writing. The remainder are of various kinds. Some emphasize writing which is called "practical"—filling out forms, writing personal and business letters, and so forth. Two emphasize "technical writing," explaining "how a machine operates, how to repair it, a scientific experiment, a process, a medical report, a law brief, [and] a constitution or laws for a club or organization." The three courses, intended for students who have "difficulty with clear expression" or who "lack confidence as writers," emphasize "personal" writing. Such courses involve keeping journals and writing personal reactions to various stimuli "without worrying too much about 'correct' form and rules."

The great majority of the 111 utilitarian writing courses and the research courses which emphasize writing derive from traditional aspects of teaching writing in the high schools: sentence structure, the paragraph, the four types of writing, and *x* steps to the research paper. Some of these concepts may be extremely useful in the hands of certain expert teachers. With one or two exceptions, however, there is very little evidence that the most recent thinking about the teaching of writing has had much impact on the programs examined in this study. The effort in thirty-six of the seventy programs to develop a sequence of courses at various levels of complexity is certainly the most advanced feature of the composition courses. But the need to continue efforts to improve and update composition offerings is obvious.

The seventy-one creative writing courses offered by fifty-seven programs are intended for a highly select group of students. Several course descriptions make the point explicitly: they are

"for more imaginative students with a good writing background." Several course descriptions stress submitting pieces of writing for publication and entering contests. Nearly every course mentions writing poetry and prose. We have already seen that only 6.4 percent of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders in three high schools ranked poetry as their first choice of reading material (see table 2). As part of the same survey the students were asked to rank the kinds of writing they most enjoyed doing. The survey listed five types: writing a poem, writing a story, writing about personal experiences, writing an analysis, or writing to a friend. Only 9.4 percent of 2,947 students responding ranked poetry first; but 47.5 percent ranked it fifth. One virtue of elective programs is their ability to offer a fairly specialized course to a select clientele.

While many of the course descriptions mention prose and poetry, many are much more specific, listing descriptions, character sketches, personal essays, poems, dialogues, one-act plays, short stories, and the development of style. One mentions the possibility of beginning a novel. Over 90 percent of the descriptions suggest that the basic approach to creative writing is through the study of good literature as examples of forms and techniques which will then be used by the student. Some of the descriptions emphasize student criticism of each other's writing and the individual student's freedom to develop as a writer in the direction he chooses.

A fairly typical creative writing course, for example, begins with a "unit on perception and observation" with students describing what they see in pictures and films and attempting to make use of as much concrete detail as possible. The students receive "numerous assignments to describe specific locations, . . . people, and objects." Then they study "fundamental techniques of writing" and read various selections which illustrate the techniques. A unit on dialogue is followed by a unit on the short story, which includes "analyses of the short story form," writing a story, and "outside reading to strengthen the student's understanding of problems peculiar to this work." The unit on poetry begins with various assignments in concrete poetry before moving to a "review of versification" and the introduction and writing of several forms, including haiku, tanka, cinquain, ballad stanza, and sonnet. The course includes the reading and criticism of student writing and encourages individuals to develop their own forms and to pursue their own interests.

Media Courses

Apart from journalism and theater, media courses fall into three categories: those concerned with several of the mass media, film study courses, and filmmaking courses. Although some of the mass media courses include the study of films, there are enough courses devoted exclusively to the study or making of films to consider them separately. A great many programs offer courses devoted exclusively to theater and newspaper production. Commonly, a program may offer two courses in acting and a course in stage production, as well as journalism and courses which involve work on the school newspaper and yearbook. Since such courses are traditional high school electives, there is no need to consider them in detail here.

The major emphasis in 75 percent of the thirty-nine mass media courses is on the analysis and evaluation of various media. One course lists literature, film, music, art, radio, television, photographs, magazine advertising, and highway billboards as possibilities for study. The courses are frequently concerned with the analysis of advertising, propaganda, and the psychological "effects of media on society." One course, "designed to help the student develop critical reading, listening, and viewing habits in regard to newspapers, magazines, radio, and television," organizes units "around each of the four media." However, "the media are tied together by means of comparison and contrast whenever possible."[45] Another course appears to be a comparative study of "media techniques in presenting news, commentary, features, and advertising."[46] Rather than focusing on one medium at a time, the course is organized to examine a series of aspects common to several media.

In addition to the analytical focus, a few course descriptions emphasize increasing the students' own "powers to communicate" in writing and speaking or through the use of various media. For example, "Mass Media and Communication," a course at Hickman (Columbia, Missouri) High School, is one of three courses that can be taken for sophomore composition credit and is designed to help students "with listening, speaking, reading, thinking, and writing skills." The course includes the study of "video tapes of television programs and tapes of radio programs," the reading of "news stories, feature stories, and magazine articles," and the examination of the ways "people communicate through action, in

nonverbal behavior." In addition, the students write various kinds of articles for publication in a class newspaper or magazine and produce a video-taped television show from a script which they write and edit. The course activities are intended to help the students "develop communication skills by active involvement in meaningful communication situations." A course at Franklin (New Hampshire) High School, intended for students who "have problems with language skills," promotes the study of various media to help students "acquire communication skills—reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking."

A few courses appear to devote primary attention to the development of media projects of various kinds. One course at Bridgewater-Raritan (New Jersey) High School, for example, involves students in the production of "tapes and slides to illustrate poetry, modern music, and original scripts" and in the creation of "scripts for television and the actual taping of these scripts on school-owned television equipment." A course at Wayne (Michigan) High School includes the creation of several different media projects. After a general introduction to media, the students make "animated films by drawing figures on 16mm films"; write a script for, shoot, and edit a movie; write articles for a class newspaper; and write and produce both television and radio shows.

Thirty-one film study courses appear in twenty-seven programs, and ten programs offer an additional twelve courses which specialize in filmmaking. The great majority of the film study courses focus on the techniques and "language of the film as an art form." Only three courses are historically oriented. The film study course at Niles Township West (Skokie, Illinois) High School, for example, deals with the "visual language of film (panning, tracking, dissolve, montage, etc.)," "the contribution sound makes . . . (music, silence, sound effects, dialogue)," "the principles of editing," and so forth. Film study courses usually involve viewing and discussing several films as well as reading a variety of materials, including reviews, essays, and books on the nature of film. Students frequently write their own reviews, and some courses require essays analyzing various aspects of particular films, such as the "narrative, symbolic [and] metaphorical" levels of film.

Filmmaking courses stress examination of many of the same techniques, including script writing, but with the ultimate goal of

producing a short film. Various courses encourage students to make short animated films, documentaries, and sequences of images implying a central theme but with no actors or plot, as well as short films involving acting. The Trenton (Michigan) High School course, in addition to a "longer film with sound," includes the following student projects:

1. One fifty-foot reel of clear film drawn on with magic marker which has a meaningful message.
2. One fifty-foot collage made from scrap film which illustrates some point of view.
3. One five-minute tape which has some specific meaning, such as a taped interview of reactions to pertinent social questions (open housing, etc.) or a tape of sounds (motorcycles, cars, boats, etc.).
4. One film script from which the students will shoot their first film, a three-minute film with sound striping or synchronized tape.[47]

In addition, the Trenton course suggests the tape recording of various sequences of sounds and dialogue, the video taping of parts of scripts, and the use of 35mm cameras–all as preparation and practice for the production of the final sound movie.

The various media courses are clearly among the most innovative offerings of elective programs, even though, in some schools, such innovations took place several years ago. Unfortunately, when media study is assigned to a particular course, it seems to stay there despite the advantages which can accrue from its integration with other aspects of English. For example, the study of the verbal and nonverbal language of advertisements can be very effective as part of a much broader study of the affective uses of language. Asking students to design a slide-tape program concerning some particular social issue or ideal makes a very powerful component of a composition program. In fact, any number of media-related projects can be integrated with other aspects of English with great advantage. The appearance of non-literary media courses in elective programs is a positive advance, but alternatives to compartmentalizing them should seriously be considered.

Humanities Courses

Twenty-six of the high school programs in this study offer thirty-nine "humanities" courses, a term limited here to courses which attempt to integrate literature, music, painting, sculpture,

and other arts. A few courses in certain programs were labeled "humanities" courses but seemed to have more in common with thematic courses, focusing on literature and involving no special attention to the other arts. Because in one sense any English course is a humanities course, the distinction above seems useful. In fact, the great majority of courses labeled "humanities" did involve specific attention to the non-literary arts.

The humanities courses in this study are organized in a variety of ways. Some have an extremely broad base. One is called "an investigation of world culture." Two are described as "surveys of Western culture bringing into focus previous courses in English, history, or the arts." Areas of study, the description continues, "will include art and music appreciation and the major trends in Western literature and thought."[48] Another course "explores man's heritage as related to music and other art forms,"[49] and another is described as a "study of great ideas as expressed through the allied arts: art, music, literature, philosophy, sculpture, and architecture." Other courses are somewhat more specific. One confines itself to the humanities in America, another to the Italian Renaissance. Most of the humanities courses surveyed for this study fall into one of the above categories.

A few courses have potential for a more particularized examination of the humanities. One is a comparative study of the art, drama, poetry, and music emanating from ancient Athens, Renaissance Florence, and contemporary New York City. Another focuses on "the type of creative artist whose whole life seemed to be a search for perfection in sculpture, art, music, or literature."[50] A third investigates the questions, "What is art?" and "What is good art?" The description states that "both traditional and contemporary aesthetic views are studied in relation to specific examples in art, music, and literature."

Considered against this backdrop, the "Humanities I" course at Trenton (Michigan) High School is indeed unusual and anything but esoteric. In fact, each of its three major sections–the physical, pictorial, and musical environments–begins with material that has great immediacy for any student. For example, the section on the physical environment begins with projecting pictures of commercial architecture ("offices, bars, hotels, etc.") and discussion of student preferences, followed by examination and discussion of "more aesthetic architecture (museums, churches, schools, etc.)." Students then move to the problem of "whether function or form

should be the deciding factor in commercial architecture." In a short time, the discussion moves to the "contemporary theories of domestic architecture" of Frank Lloyd Wright and others. In the third week of the course students "describe a natural setting in which to construct a house and then design a floor plan," and, after some work on landscaping, "sketch a final picture of the designed and landscaped house." Various films and slides are an integral part of the whole sequence.

Each section of the course begins with discussions of students' immediate reactions and general attitudes toward some aspect of the humanities and progresses toward principles of aesthetics as related to phenomena within the students' own experience. Each includes some project that the students engage in—the house design above, a photographic essay, writing lyrics for songs—and each section moves the students a bit beyond their immediate environment to the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, the music of Gershwin and Grofé, the photography of Steichen, or the painting of David.[51] Anyone who suspects that the Trenton staff has forsaken "Western culture" should peek at "Humanities II."[52] It begins with "pre-Greek cultures."*

*A useful book for those interested in developing humanities courses is *Teaching the Humanities*, by Sheila Schwartz. (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1970.)

Course Design

In addition to the specific trends in course design suggested earlier, four general aspects of design require consideration: assessment of student abilities and interests, course objectives, evaluation, and the tendency to compartmentalize instruction. Perhaps the most often repeated defense of elective programs is that they "meet the needs, interests, and abilities of the students" through the variety of courses they offer. The courses have been developed in some programs (but not all) to accommodate a range of ability levels. The Trenton (Michigan) High School humanities courses mentioned above are clear examples of such differentiation, clear because the first involves minimal reading and writing, while the second involves a great deal of reading and writing. When courses involve a similar amount of reading and writing, however, the distinction is not always so simple. Further, mere quantitative distinctions among courses can be superficial. To require brighter students to do *quantitatively* more work sometimes results in what students see as busy work. The most valuable sort of differentiation involves differences in the degree of sophistication courses require and engender—not just in the amount of work they entail. The most common mechanism for such differentiation is phasing, which is used in an explicit manner by twenty-one programs in this study.

When the phases are listed, however, the levels are often couched in such vague language that their utility is open to question. In one instance, the course levels are discriminated from one another by expressions such as the following: "for students who experience great difficulty in reading"; "for students who experience somewhat less difficulty in reading and writing"; "for students who have no serious problems with basic skills"; and so forth. Not only are students supposed to categorize themselves according to these levels, but teachers are supposed to develop courses for the designated ability groups. Working from such vague descriptions must result in courses which only approximate the "needs" and abilities of some students. Many of the courses seem to have been designed with the notion of providing work easy enough for those who have "somewhat more difficulty in English" to get through.

With the exception of the courses in reading, which generally proceed on the basis of some analysis of the students' strengths and weaknesses as readers, most courses appear to proceed in the same fashion with the same subject matter *regardless* of differences in specific student abilities (e.g., the ability to draw inferences about the personal relationships among characters in a story, to identify and interpret a literary symbol, to use specific detail in writing, and so forth).

That instruction must begin with the student's abilities and experience has become an educational cliché. But it is no less true for that. However, to be effective it must begin with specific information. To say that a student reads at the tenth grade level is little help. The generalization of reading level provides no specific information about the kinds of inferences a student will be able to draw in reading literature. Similarly, characterizing a student as an "average" writer is little use unless the characterization provides specific information about the student's writing.

One item in the questionnaire sent to department chairmen and supervisors asks, "What methods do the teachers use systematically to insure that the instruction in a given course will be appropriate to the students enrolled in it?" Fifty-six of the eighty-four respondents indicated that mechanisms for "insuring" that instruction is appropriate to the students are used prior to the beginning of the course. Of these, thirty-six indicate some kind of prior counseling, such as student-English teacher conferences, student conferences with counselors, and discussion of courses in class. An additional eleven felt that the course descriptions provided enough information about the course content to enable students to choose the courses most appropriate for them. As one respondent pointed out, "no very poor student would choose 'Literature of Anglo-Saxon England' or 'Literary Criticism,' but he might choose 'Job Opportunities,' 'The Lighter Side,' or 'Hauntings and Horrors.' " Six other respondents felt that the prior planning of courses insured that instruction would be appropriate. The kind of planning which provides such assurance, however, was not explained. Three respondents felt that their schools were small enough for the faculty to know the students well and that such knowledge insured appropriate instruction.

A few mentioned various mechanisms used after instruction had taken place. Eight mentioned that tests and compositions indicated the appropriateness of instruction, five mentioned student

evaluations of courses, and three mentioned the enrollment of students in courses. If students respond negatively on evaluations or fail to enroll in the course, the assumption is that the previous instruction has been inappropriate. Four respondents listed behavioral objectives but only one of them pointed out that evaluation in terms of the objectives indicated the level of effective instruction. Five respondents indicated that students could be transferred out of one course into another if the student proved somehow unequal to the work of the course.

Of eighty-four respondents, only sixteen listed one or more ways to increase the appropriateness of the learning experiences within a course. Eight claimed to individualize instruction but did not explain how the individualization took place. Five claimed that courses were planned with flexible materials and objectives, so that students of varying abilities could succeed at the tasks they undertook. A few said that teachers varied the course offerings to meet individual abilities. One respondent, for example, noted that "We rely much more than before on student involvement, group work, and individual study. . . . In 'Science Fiction,' for example, one group may be doing a metaphysics unit using C. S. Lewis while another is plowing through *Planet of the Apes.*"

Permitting students to choose courses, providing counseling prior to course selection, and varying objectives, materials, and approaches all constitute a tremendous improvement over traditional programs which exposed all students to the same materials and activities, whether or not the exposure made any difference. Still, nearly 23 percent of the respondents suggested no particular means for making instruction appropriate. Another 66 percent rely primarily on measures taken *before* the students enroll in the courses. And only 19 percent listed even general methods for varying instruction to make it appropriate to the students enrolled.

In addition to collecting anonymous student evaluations of specific courses, planning so that instruction can be varied, and providing specific course descriptions and counseling prior to course selection, elective programs might find two other procedures extremely useful: the use of various informal diagnostic instruments at the beginning of each course and the maintenance of student progress folders. A small battery of such inventories could be designed to ascertain the student's strengths and weaknesses in regard to general English concepts, skills, and interests, and to those that pertain to a particular course. For

example, a teacher might collect two or three composition samples, deriving from various situations–one designed to determine the student's ability to organize and use specific detail in support of generalizations, another to discover the student's ability to record specific observations, and so forth. For reading literature, the teacher might ask students to read a story of the kind to be used in the course and to answer a series of questions, extending from very easy literal questions to complex inferential ones, to determine the types of reading problems a student can or cannot deal with. In a course on communications, for example, the teacher might wish to know something of a student's ability to detect bias or propaganda. Or he might wish to discover the particular interests and experiences of his students with various media–for example, which students have still or movie cameras, which have developed and printed pictures, and which play various musical instruments? In another course a teacher might wish to know the extent to which his students can use the library efficiently.

All such information, collected early in the course, can be of immense value in adapting a course to the *specific* abilities, interests, and experiences of the students. Without a systematic collection of appropriate information, it is not unusual for half a semester to pass before the teacher discovers that some students can barely read particular works at the plot level; for the first important composition to reveal that some students cannot organize and needed instruction in that area *before* writing the composition; or for the course to end before a student reveals himself as an amateur photographer who might have made a showing of his own pictures or taught other students photographic techniques that might have added a significant dimension to a media course. Without a systematic collection of data, the teacher can rely only on his intuition to judge the general appropriateness of instruction. He cannot plan specific means of extending the particular abilities of his students. He can only differentiate instruction in a general way, such as providing easier material for slower readers. But although that is better than no differentiation at all, it is probably not so effective as planning instruction in order to build each student's reading and writing powers in specific ways.

The use of systematic inventories of specific abilities and interests seems particularly pertinent to elective courses with

their emphasis on a variety of short courses.* Even in a course eighteen weeks long, a teacher has little time to learn about the specific abilities and interests of his students. But when courses are only six, nine, or twelve weeks, careful planning in terms of specific strengths and weaknesses of individual students is nearly impossible without inventories and other diagnostic techniques. In a six-week course it may be impossible even with inventories. It must be inferred from questionnaire responses and most course descriptions that such techniques are not used except in reading courses and some composition courses. It is undoubtedly true that no very poor student will elect a course that he judges too difficult for him. Unfortunately, the fact that a course is *not* too difficult is no guarantee that it will serve to increase an individual's skills and understandings.

Objectives

A second consideration in course design is the nature of the objectives. Only twenty-nine of the program guides available to this study are detailed enough to include separate, explicit statements of objectives in individual course descriptions. Several of those have attempted to write behavioral objectives. The remainder of the objectives fall into three general categories: those that suggest the general purposes of education, those that suggest the broad goals of English programs, and those that are related to particular courses.

Course objectives appropriate to the whole range of educational experiences tend to be rather common. One program, for example, lists the following objective for a course on social protest: "to deepen the student's sense of history, increase his capacity for compassion, and help him come to a better understanding of himself and his place in the world." Of twenty-two courses listed in the program, not one other course has a similar objective.

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*For specific suggestions in developing inventories see *The Dynamics of English Instruction*, by Hillocks, McCabe, and McCampbell (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 24-41, 236-253, 258-266, 396-400, 477-502; *Teaching English 7-12*, by Lewis and Sisk (New York: American Book Company, 1963), pp. 120-131, 341-374, 427-428; and *Teaching Language and Literature, Grades 7-12*, by Loban, Ryan, and Squire (New York: Harcourt Brace and Jovanovich, 1961), pp. 223-228, 578-583.

Surely that does not mean that this course is the one for compassion and that the others need not bother with it. An objective of another program is "to help the student identify his own values and to see them in relationship to those of society." [53] The course outline indicates no particular approach to the identification of personal or social values. Nevertheless, the objective is an important one for education as a whole.

In a third program, a course in creative writing lists the following as an objective: "The student should be encouraged to live in such a way that in his everyday life he has varied experiences." Although educators might debate the character and extent of the variation one should seek, the objective suggests a quality of life that nearly everyone would accept, but, again, it represents a purpose of all education. Somewhat less grandiose, but still widely applicable objectives appear in a course description for "Personal Writing" in a fourth program: "to build self-confidence by allowing students to succeed at their level of capability and by giving concrete evidence of that success" and "to promote self-awareness and personal growth." As in the case of the other objectives listed above, these have no counterpart in the other course descriptions available in the same program, but it is clearly appropriate for any course at nearly any level.

A second group of general objectives has more particular relevance to English. For example, a course called "American Writers Today" lists the following as an objective: "Students will respond to experiences and points of view found in reading by relating them to their own in discussion and writing." A "Basic Composition" course in another program lists the objective, "to enable the student to increase his perception of the world in which he lives and to improve his ability to express these perceptions through effective sentences and paragraphs." Several course descriptions in various programs include objectives for which the following are prototypes: "to encourage reading for enjoyment," "to develop wider reading habits," "to encourage sensitivity to words and language," and "to select and arrange words to express self exactly." All such statements express the purposes of a whole English program rather than the specific objectives of a particular course. At least, they would be appropriate to many English courses.

The remaining objectives are directly related to the specific courses with which they are listed. A great many of these,

however, are vague, giving only very general direction to the course. For example, one survey of English literature to 1620 states that "the purpose of this course is to make the student aware of his ancestry. The student should also be able to see and understand the changing English language." The objective for an American survey is "to help students understand the growth of our national literary culture during periods of growth (Western expansion) and restless self-identification (the Civil War) until its coming of age at the close of the nineteenth century as revealed in the literary masterpieces of the times." In another program a course on Shakespeare includes the following objectives: "to coordinate the Elizabethan Age with Shakespearian drama" and "to acquire a command of the jargon of Shakespearian drama." A writing course in a different program includes such objectives as "to make students aware of style" and "to promote tolerance of others through the study of dialectology." A writing course in still another program lists, among other objectives, "to understand and be able to use narrative writing (techniques and paragraph construction)." In a different program a course entitled "Four Generations–Searching" lists as its first objective "to become aware of those who seek some answer to the dilemmas our society poses."[54] A speech course lists the objective "to acquaint students with seven steps in becoming an interesting speaker."

One serious problem with vague course objectives is that, although they indicate a course topic, they can be satisfied by nearly any standard and provide the teacher with only very limited criteria for evaluating the success of his instruction. If the teacher only lectures about "the seven steps in becoming an interesting speaker," "style," or "those who seek some answer to the dilemmas our society poses," he satisfies the objectives in a sense. Even if the students do not understand the lectures, they have been "exposed" or "made aware." To develop more specific criteria, a number of programs have attempted to develop behavioral objectives. As the director of one elective program has written,

> Our purpose, then, was–and is–to define what we believe to be valid educational objectives for the teaching of English, to design courses aimed at achieving these objectives, to isolate concepts that contribute most toward achieving our objectives, and to formulate as specifically as we can those approaches that will help the students, not only in

> acquiring knowledge, but—and this is most important—in making the knowledge more meaningful through what Bloom has labeled comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. . . . Behavioral objectives force us to be conscious of changes we are effecting in pupil behavior. "What can the learner do as a result of instruction that he could not do before?" "How do a student's feeling and thinking change as a result of instruction?"[55]

Behavioral objectives have other advantages as well. They permit evaluation of the objective itself, indicate the type of instruction necessary to achieve the objective, and enable the teacher to evaluate the effectiveness of his instruction.

One program's Shakespeare course presents the following objective: "to study Shakespeare's poetry for further insight into his poetic command." There is no way for the teacher to evaluate the validity of that objective until he works out the meanings of such words as "insight" and "poetic command." The classroom procedures themselves may provide the key. Are students expected to identify poetic devices and tell why they are effective? Do they select passages of their own choice and explain how the various poetic devices operate in relation to the passage, the scene, and the play as a whole? Or are students simply responsible for recalling teacher explanations of a series of passages, as students frequently are in college level courses? If the objective is a serious one, surely such distinctions are worth working out. An objective for a Shakespeare course in another program is apparently intended as a behavioral one: "the student should be able to demonstrate his comprehension of the subtleties of Shakespeare's language by paraphrasing, orally or in writing, significant passages from the works studied." Although one wonders whether a paraphrase actually reveals "comprehension of the subleties of Shakespeare's language," at least the objective indicates somewhat more specifically the level of comprehension the teacher hopes will be achieved, in this case a fairly simplistic one. But the teacher has at least some notion of what he means by "comprehension of the subleties of Shakespeare's language" and can decide on the appropriateness of the objective as he teaches the course. When the objective remains vague and undefined, it is likely to remain part of the course description without ever being realized. The assumption apparently is that any attention to Shakespeare's language will result in "further insight into his poetic command."

A specifically stated objective will both indicate the type of instruction necessary and enable the teacher to evaluate the effectiveness of his instruction. Consider the following examples:

1. To choose two or three key passages, each of ten lines or more, from a Shakespearean play studied independently and to write an essay explaining how the language, imagery, and action of the passages are related to other passages and to some central theme of the play. Stating the theme and choosing the key passages are the student's options. The important thing is explaining the relationships among them.
2. To participate with three or four other students in planning and presenting a studio production of an important scene from a play studied in class and, following the production, to present with the other students an oral explanation of why the scene was staged and acted as it was.

The first objective suggests that class activities include teacher- and student-led discussions of key passages in relation to the themes of the plays studied, student debates concerning the most appropriate formulations of theme as they see them, brief written explanations of the language, imagery, or action of particular passages, and so forth, all prior to the students' studying a play independently and writing their essays. At some point in the midst of such activities, which will help the students become able to fulfill the requirements of the final paper, the teacher may decide the objective is too demanding for his students and may revise it.

The second objective suggests activities such as discussing the various options for staging and acting particular scenes, speculating on how various readings of lines and staging of events might vary the impact on the audience, planning productions of particular scenes, watching live or filmed productions of those plays, and comparing student plans for production with the actual stage or film productions. Again, all of this is done prior to the student productions. Thus, specific objectives provide clues for classroom activities, and if those activities are either boring or too difficult for the students, the objectives are probably in need of revision, at least for that particular class.

Specific objectives also provide a clear means of evaluating instruction, if they are used in conjunction with the results of various inventories suggested above. If at the beginning of a course a student cannot relate the imagery of one passage to that of another but can by the end of the course, if at the beginning of

the course he has no ideas about staging a scene but does by the end, the instruction has obviously had some effect.

For all that, however, specific objectives are not everything. Some of the most significant purposes of English instruction cannot be expressed meaningfully as behavioral objectives. For example, we might hope that students will have increased understanding of other human beings, will examine and evaluate their own experiences introspectively, will be creative in their responses to artistic experiences, and so forth. In short, it makes a great deal of sense for a group of teachers planning an elective program (or any program) to wrestle with the problem of making their broad educational purposes explicit, to develop a set of the general purposes appropriate to English instruction, to write specific objectives for each course, and to evaluate the specific objectives against the broader purposes. All three levels are difficult to develop, all three are important, and all three should be subject to continued evaluation and revision.

Integration of Subject Matter and Skills

An examination of the programs and course descriptions reveals a curious paradox. On the one hand many program descriptions state that each course, "regardless of the content, has built into it learning experiences in the basic skills: reading, writing, speaking, thinking, and listening."[56] On the other hand most questionnaire respondents have suggested that a major strength of elective programs is that they allow teachers to specialize or "make the best use of their talents and interests." Donald Weise, the director of the APEX (Trenton, Michigan) program, states what appears to be typical of many programs: "If one teaches Humanities, he need not worry about whether or not students should be getting work in the mass media or intensive training in reading skills. Other courses are designed to handle those needs."[57]

The problem is that few English teachers have ever offered "intensive training in reading skills" at the expense of other aspects of English. In fact, most English teachers know very little about the teaching of reading and view reading as somehow distinct from the study of literature. The folklore is that students learn to read by seventh or eighth grade, and after that they study literature. In reality, however, many students in the twelfth grade can barely read at the literal level, and many other are frustrated

when they encounter even the simplest ambiguity. Any English teacher who does not see himself as one who should, at the very least, help his students learn to interpret what they read is ignoring the realities that engulf him. And that is true not only at the secondary level but at the college level. In the same sense, every English teacher must regard himself as a teacher of composition. If he confines his role to assigning compositions and allows himself the luxury of believing that composition will be taught in another course, he puts himself in the position of Dr. Pangloss, who in the midst of human corruption and natural tragedy could believe that no real problems existed.

With the exception of thematic and humanities courses, the normal tendency in elective programs is to divide the subject matter of English into its parts, with the result that separate courses in the sentence, the paragraph, the short story, the American short story, Greek drama, the newspaper, the *Bible*, black literature, and so forth, proliferate. Although "divide and conquer" may be a good motto for military commanders, it may not be appropriate for English teachers One of the problems of traditional academic instruction is that each area is isolated from other areas to the extent that the study of one actually inhibits making associations with others. If English is truly a humanistic study, its professors should be looking for ways of bringing subject areas together and not simply splitting them into the most convenient chunks.

Even the course in Shakespeare provides a good example. If an instructor expects his students to write as part of the course, he should be prepared to offer instruction in writing. He should be familiar with the drama and writers of other times and should be prepared to offer comparative studies in tragedy, comedy, and romance. He should be able to introduce aspects of staging, costuming, directing, and acting. He should be familiar with staged and filmed versions of Shakespearean plays and should be able to introduce music, including not only the Elizabethan songs that Shakespeare knew, but music such as Benjamin Britten's and Mendelssohn's compositions for *Midsummer Night's Dream* and Tchaikovsky's overture for *Romeo and Juliet*.

Although there is value in "allowing" teachers "to teach their forte (to specialize) in language arts in order to promote quality instruction," as one program description states, there are concomitant dangers in the excessive compartmentalization of subject

matter and in specialization. Encouraging students to let their experiences shed light on each other and to make associations is too important a part of the educational process to ignore the problem. Perhaps elective programs should strive to bring various aspects of knowledge, art, and experience into dynamic relationships rather than to separate them for convenience.

Evaluation

Methods

Three items on the questionnaire to chairmen and supervisors inquired about methods and results of evaluations. The first asked, "What methods have you used to collect evidence of the effectiveness of your program?" Twenty-three, or over 27 percent, of eighty-four respondents reported using none. Of the remainder, nearly 30 percent make use of a formal student evaluation, 25 percent take oral student comments into account, and over 20 percent rely exclusively on one or both of these methods. Slightly over 20 percent make use of teacher judgments, but only six, or 7.1 percent, collect written statements from the faculty. Six programs rely exclusively on some form of teacher judgment as the means of evaluation. Seven programs make use of standardized tests, five use classroom tests, but only two make use of tests based on "performance" objectives. Other programs list such evaluation methods as studies of college performance, surveys of parents, and noting changes in grades. About 67 percent of all the programs either use no method or only one of those mentioned. Clearly, very few of the elective programs in this study involve systematic evaluation, but then it is likely that traditional programs make even feebler attempts to evaluate their effectiveness.

The most common mode of evaluation is the collection of student responses, either the occasional comments of a few students or the systematic survey of all students. The more reliable of the two approaches, of course, is the systematic survey. Collecting student comments in an unsystematic fashion can result in considerable distortion. Probably everyone has encountered the teacher who "does" the unit on poetry, covering everything from onomatopoeia to caesura, from iamb to oxymoron, and from couplet to rondeau—all in four to six weeks and who then feels that his unit is a success simply because one or two students return later to praise the course. But the traditional poetry teacher is not the only guilty party. Even the extreme liberal teacher who desires nothing more than to make psychic contact with his students is subject to the same error. Of course, it is natural for teachers to

listen most to the students who respond most enthusiastically, and it is easy to ignore students whose responses are less than positive. But collecting responses on the basis of one's own bias should be and can easily be avoided.

Written or scaled responses collected from all students help to avoid such biases. Every student deserves a chance to make his opinions count, especially if they are negative. The attitude inventories available to this study involve scaled items of one kind or another. Some include items calling for written responses as well. Typically, a questionnaire includes from ten to twenty items. Presumably, the number of items is limited simply because of the work involved in compiling the results. The items ordinarily consist of a statement or question followed by a scale with the dimensions indicated at the extremes or at each point on the scale. The following restricted response items are typical:

Example A: To what extent do you feel your writing skill has improved this semester?

very little little some much very much

Example B: Have you found electives interesting and stimulating?

High _____ Low
4 3 2 1

Example C: The reasons for doing the classroom work were clear.

a. sometimes b. always c. never

In developing restricted response items it is useful to consider the relationships among the stem, the response pattern, and the dimensions of the scale. There should be a logical relationship between the stem and the scale. That is, the response pattern should be appropriate to the question. A question generating a yes-no response should be followed by yes-no. Example B above, for instance, can be revised to read "To what extent have you found electives interesting and stimulating?"

The dimensions of the response pattern also deserve attention. The possible responses in example A represent a scale. However, since the middle term is positive (some), the scale is skewed heavily toward the positive response, and the term "some" cannot be considered equidistant from "little" and "much." In fact, all the terms of the scale represent positive responses of a sort. One way around the difficulty is to use only the end terms at the extremes of a five-point scale.

The scale in example B presents a different problem. The midpoint in a scale bounded by opposite terms represents a neutral response. It is neither "high" nor "low." With a four-point scale, however, the student is not permitted a neutral response. Some questionnaire writers use "excluded middle" items intentionally when they wish to force a negative or positive response. But it seems reasonable to permit students the option of being indifferent. Example C represents still a different problem. It presents two such extreme answers, "always" and "never," that they themselves almost force the third answer, "sometimes." The alternatives in a question such as this are to soften the extremes or to use the terms as the extremes on a scale of more than three points.

A carefully constructed questionnaire, designed to get at all aspects of student attitudes and administered to permit students a degree of anonymity in revealing their attitudes, can be used effectively to estimate responses to particular classes and to the English program as a whole over a period of years. For example, if one major purpose of an English program is to encourage positive attitudes toward writing, the questionnaire might include a series of both restricted and free response items to gauge changes in attitudes. Such items might include various value scales (e.g., interesting to boring, valuable to worthless), items requesting students to rank writing against other activities, items asking students to list the kinds of writing they have done on their own recently, and so forth. The items will vary in substance from school to school, but the items themselves and the administration of the questionnaire should be honest, permitting a student to make as negative a response as he wishes. This can be done easily by allowing the student to remain anonymous and by having someone other than the teacher administer the questionnaire to the students.

Only seven questionnaire respondents in this study reported using standardized tests in their evaluation of elective programs. One questionnaire item asked respondents, "To what extent do you feel standardized tests of reading and composition would provide an adequate measure of student progress in your program? If you do not feel such tests are adequate, please explain why." Seventeen of the eighty-four respondents stated that they had not used standardized tests or did not answer the question. Of the remainder, twenty-three either found standardized tests useful or

were hoping to use them in the near future. Forty-one respondents (nearly 50 percent) found them inadequate for various reasons. Nineteen believed that standardized tests could not measure the course objectives. One respondent pointed out, for example, that "standardized tests could not cover the wide range of our subject offerings and fit the levels for which the classes are designed. For example, we offer a nonfiction and a folklore class for our very lowest achievers. We try to offer material that will appeal to the particular class level." Another respondent wrote, "No standardized tests can be used. Our courses are individualized by teachers and students. Placement tests–SAT, PSAT–which show students' ability to read, recognize ideas, etc., *are* valid." Perhaps the response to the item is based in part on a misapprehension of the nature of standardized tests! Another respondent felt that "improvement in reading and composition would probably be demonstrable but slight. Greatest progress has been made, I think, in the area of student attitudes toward English. Standardized tests don't measure this."

Various other reasons are given for the rejection of standardized tests: they cannot test knowledge of English, they cannot measure "depth of perception," they are "too impersonal." A few respondents exhibited considerable hostility toward standardized tests: "Don't get me started on this one! . . . All of this stress on standardized tests, accountability, and behavioral objectives is dehumanizing education. What is happening to insight and understanding?"

Whether or not standardized tests dehumanize education any more or less than the average English teacher is problematic, but there are some serious problems with standardized tests. The structure of standardized tests requires them to present the "key" or the "right" answer along with a number of "distractors." The problem for the person taking the test becomes one of choosing from among the alternatives presented. In a real situation he must generate his own "right" answer, interpretation, or hypothesis. Because of its structure, the standardized test has no way of taking into account highly deviant, but very insightful, answers and solutions. The "right" answers for standardized tests are limited by the test maker's insight and imagination. A standardized reading test cannot present a realistic range of reading experiences. It is necessarily confined to short passages followed by a long series of questions. Standardized tests never include a full length

short story, for example. Finally, the reporting of scores in grade levels or percentiles tends to obscure information unless they are reported with a breakdown of scores by sections and items. And because of the factors that can influence performance on tests, the scores for an individual may not be reliable.

Nevertheless, given such restrictions, standardized tests do provide measures of student abilities in terms of rather clearly defined reading and writing tasks. While the score for an individual student on a particular occasion may not be reliable, the scores for groups of students can provide insight into the overall effectiveness of instruction. When so many programs emphasize the inclusion of all language arts skills in all courses, there should be some index of how effectively they are taught. At the same time the results of a standardized test cannot be the *sole* criterion for judging the effectiveness of an entire program.

Two evaluations made use of observational techniques. The evaluation of Project APEX, the Trenton (Michigan) High School elective program, included Flanders' interaction analysis of classes[58] in two control schools as well as in the classes of the elective program. The main purpose, however, was not to evaluate the program but to determine the kind and degree of student verbal response and interaction. The Mt. Diablo (California) Unified School District made use of classroom observation combined with a survey of student response to evaluate the pilot courses to be used in what that system calls a selective system. The observations utilized a set of nine hypotheses for judging a sound English program. The hypotheses derive from James R. Squire and Roger Applebee's study, *High School English Instruction Today*. The following are examples:

1. Selective courses will provide comprehensive instruction in the skills of reading for all students.
2. There will be a perceptibly good intellectual climate in the class. More emphasis will be placed on ideas and processes of thought than on rote learning.
3. Language, literature, and composition will be taught in appropriate proportion and not as separate entities. Instruction will be coordinated and integrated.[59]

Such statements as "good intellectual climate" and "appropriate proportion" obviously require further definition, as do key parts of most of the other hypotheses. For example, observers of one

course noted in relation to "comprehensive instruction in the skills of reading" that the students read aloud, that the teacher reads aloud, and that readings are followed by discussion.[60] Whether or not such practice represents "comprehensive instruction" in reading is, at best, open to question. Nevertheless, if observers can decide what such hypotheses mean in concrete terms, they may be able to make valuable contributions to an elective program.

Demands for the evaluation of relatively innovative programs are frequently interpreted as attempts by reactionaries to halt progress. As one supervisor of an elective program said, "I don't see why everyone is demanding evaluation now. They never talked about it when we had the traditional program." A cogent point. But let's reverse the emphasis. After all, traditional programs are in even greater need of careful evaluation. The fact that they have never been evaluated *carefully* may in part be responsible for their failure. Unfortunately, when people think of evaluation they think of tests and assigning grades to students—the least important and least necessary function of evaluation. The important question has to do with how effective the instruction is. Has a course or program really done what it is presumed to do? Every English teacher, traditional or otherwise, believes that "appreciation of literature" should be an important result of English classes. Yet very few make any serious attempt to discover whether it really is a result. Too often students *hate* literature as the result of all efforts, and nobody is ever the wiser.

Evaluation is not a simple process. The use of only one or two procedures is probably as dangerous as using none. A standardized reading test, for example, reveals the effectiveness of only one rather narrow dimension of the total program. To avoid narrowly based judgments, the evaluation should be eclectic, using as many approaches as practicable. The following are suggestions:

1. Review broad educational goals in terms of the program rationale and evaluate specific course objectives in terms of the broad purposes. Does the rationale withstand careful scrutiny? Do the specific course objectives reflect the wider humanistic purposes of the program? Are the specific course objectives clear enough to permit meaningful evaluation?
2. Evaluate individual courses in terms of the objectives. Have students learned to do things they could not do before taking the course? Have their skills increased? Have they increased their ability to deal with ideas independently?

3. Set up a rotating schedule of class visits, with each English teacher visiting the classes of two or three others. Does the class exhibit characteristics appropriate to the program rationale and course objectives? Are the dynamics of the classroom interaction suitable?
4. Conduct a faculty review of the total program on a regular basis. Ask an administrator and members of interested departments to join the review. Do the course offerings really satisfy the needs and abilities of all students?
5. Use a well constructed questionnaire, the items of which reflect the basic purposes of the program, to ascertain student attitudes. Use the same questionnaire every year to monitor negative and positive changes. Such a questionnaire might be developed by a student-faculty committee and administered and tabulated by a student committee. Are student attitudes strongly positive in all key areas?
6. Use attitude surveys in each course consisting of restricted and free response items related to the particular nature of the course. Students might also participate in the development, administration, and tabulation of these questionnaires. Do students believe they have learned something? Do they see their learning as valuable and interesting? What revisions do they suggest?
7. Administer standardized tests in October or November to tenth graders and in March to seniors in order to monitor progress in reading and writing. Do the results indicate school-wide improvement?
8. Use the results of all these to examine the validity of individual course offerings. How can course offerings be revised to meet the needs and abilities of all students more effectively? How can individual courses contribute to knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes more effectively?

Results

One question directed to department chairmen and supervisors of elective programs asked that they evaluate "the overall effectiveness" of their program. Of the eighty-four respondents, six did not respond on this item. Twenty-nine reported having made no formal evaluation, but ten of those included evaluative comments. Of the fifty-nine submitting evaluations, all but two were positive. Generally the respondents felt that the attitudes and

enthusiasm of both staff and students had improved perceptibly. A few reported higher student grades, fewer discipline problems, and more students taking more English courses during their senior year.

Twelve programs submitted summaries of student attitude surveys. In every case the attitudes of the students were highly positive toward the idea of elective programs. The majority of students definitely liked the opportunity of choosing their own courses. For example, one question in the Belleville (Illinois) High School questionnaire asked students, "How do you feel about being able to pick your own English courses?" Only 1.9 percent indicated some degree of "dislike," while 70 percent made a positive response, "like very much." Of 979 students responding to the same question at Washington (South Bend, Indiana) High School, 60.2 percent made the extreme positive response, while only 6.7 percent indicated any degree of "dislike." The Bridgewater-Raritan (New Jersey) High School program stated that "a survey of 1,409 students in grades ten and eleven in both high schools shows that 85 percent favor the proposed [elective] program to the present program in English."[61] Another survey reported that "87 percent of [the students] indicated that they prefer the new program to the old."[62] Where evidence is available, students clearly favor the opportunity to elect their own courses.

There is some evidence that students consider *any* elective program preferable to a nonelective, mandatory program. Certain programs, for instance, offer a series of courses which, in their content, do not differ significantly from the content of a mandatory program. The courses seem to represent enlargements of aspects of traditional programs: surveys, genre courses, composition courses, and so forth. Nevertheless, the supervisors of such programs report that nearly all students prefer the elective system to the traditional nonelective one.

Not all items on student surveys receive such positive responses, however. For example, two surveys include the question, "To what extent do you feel that your writing skill has improved this semester?" The available responses for each are "very little, little, some, much, very much." A third school phrases the question differently but uses the same response sequence: "How much did you learn in these courses about composition skills?" The number of students for the first school is not indicated; the second

included a "random sample" of over 300; the third, 1420. The results are presented in percentages:[63]

	very little	little	some	much	very much
School 1	14	25	38	16	8
School 2	7	14	36	29	13
School 3	15	23	33	20	10

In all three cases the results come reasonably close to a bell-shaped curve—what might be expected in any program. The mid-scale point, "some," is a very weak positive indicator and might best be considered neutral, especially in light of research which suggests that sophistication in writing increases with chronological age. One might well expect most students to learn *something* of composition even when instruction is minimal. The essential question is whether or not students in any program would feel that they have improved to "some" extent in composition.

The same three programs incorporate a question on reading: "To what extent do you feel your reading skill has improved this semester?" The first two programs use the same question, while the third substitutes the word *comprehension* for *skill.* All three use the same scales. Results are presented in percentages:[64]

	very little	little	some	much	very much
School 1	14.4	20.9	38.6	17.2	8.9
School 2	3	21	39	27	10
School 3	9	14	39	26	12

Once again the responses tend to conform to the normal curve, and the question is whether or not students in a traditional program would concur in their judgments concerning what they have learned. The question is especially pertinent in view of the fact that on items concerning how much students like choosing their own courses, the responses from these three schools and others are heavily skewed toward the positive end of the scale. In other words, even if students say they enjoy the opportunity to choose courses, there is apparently little reason to assume that they believe their skills in reading and writing have improved more than those of students in a traditional program might. The problem may well be worth investigating.

The evaluation of Project APEX at Trenton (Michigan) High School attempted to compare several aspects of the program over a three-year period to similar aspects of the traditional programs in

two schools with similar socioeconomic environments. Among other things, the investigation examined reading and writing achievement as measured by standardized tests and randomly drawn composition samples, the character of the students' classroom experiences as indicated by their responses to various questionnaire items and by classroom observations, and student attitudes as gauged by questionnaire responses and personal interviews.

The STEP reading and writing scores for Trenton and the two control schools appear in table 6.[65] The differences and their significances appear in table 7.[66] The differences between the Trenton scores and those of control school A in 1968 are not significant. While the Trenton scores drop from 1968 to 1969, the 1969 scores are still superior to those of control school B, but below those of control school A in 1968. The differences which warrant the closest scrutiny are those that indicate a drop in the Trenton scores in both reading and writing from 1968 to 1969. The difference between the mean writing scores for the two years at Trenton is 1.81 and is significant at the .001 level; the difference of 3.37 between the mean reading scores is also significant at the .001 level. The estimates of omega square for the two differences are .0083 and .0280 respectively, indicating that while the differences may be statistically significant, they have very little predictive power. That is, knowledge of one variable, in this case test scores, provides little help in predicting the second, the school from which a particular score comes. Nevertheless, if succeeding administrations of the same tests were to indicate negative changes of the same magnitude, there might well be cause for concern.

TABLE 6. Means and Standard Deviations for STEP Reading and Writing Tests

School	Reading		Writing	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Trenton 1968	47.78	11.36	34.97	9.77
Trenton 1969	44.41	12.63	33.16	9.54
Control A 1968	48.48	11.09	35.65	9.54
Control B 1969	43.26	12.49	31.91	10.57

TABLE 7. Differences between Means of Reading and Writing Test Scores

Reading Mean Scores					
School Population	Means	Difference	t-score	Level of Significance	Estimate of Omega Square
Control A-Trenton '68	43.48-47.78	.70	1.49	NS	.0005
Trenton '69-Control B	44.41-43.26	1.15	1.97	.05	.0015
Trenton '68-Trenton '69	47.78-44.41	3.37	6.68	.001	.0187
Control A-Trenton '69	48.48-44.41	4.07	8.30	.001	.0280
Writing Mean Scores					
School Population	Means	Difference	t-score	Level of Significance	Estimate of Omega Square
Control A-Trenton '68	35.65-34.97	.68	1.67	NS	.0008
Trenton '69-Control B	33.16-31.91	1.25	2.71	.01	.0032
Trenton '68-Trenton '69	34.97-33.16	1.81	4.49	.001	.0083
Control A-Trenton '69	35.65-33.16	2.49	6.39	.001	.0170

NS = Not Significant

In 1968 and 1969 two composition samples were drawn from random samples of students at Trenton and the control schools. Only one difference, that between Trenton and control school A on one essay in 1968, is significant at the .001 level. The other differences were not significant. In judging the essays in 1969, a seven-point scale consisting of criteria for each score plus "floating criteria" were used. The rater reliabilities with this scale were .889 and .955 on two separate checks. The mean scores on the four essay samples ranged from 2.79 to 3.02, indicating that the quality of writing at both Trenton and control school B, as judged by this means, is fairly low. In view of the fact that writing instruction in the elective program was largely confined to a few courses while every course in the traditional control school program was supposed to emphasize writing, it is surprising that the difference between the schools is not greater. In short, it appears that confining writing instruction to a few courses makes little difference. The results appear to be the same as in a traditional program. What is probably needed is not a simple administrative

reorganization of writing instruction into particular courses, but a drastic revision of approaches to the teaching of writing.

The character of the classroom experiences of Trenton students was considerably different from that of students in either of the control schools. Trenton classes displayed a wide range of class activities, including "individual reading and research projects involving special facilities, play productions, filmmaking, small group discussion, film viewing, in-class writing, [and] student-teacher conferences,"[67] as well as the usual teacher-led discussions. In the control schools, however, teacher-led discussion and lecture were the dominant patterns of instruction. These observations were confirmed by student responses to questionnaire items that requested they check "never," "sometimes," or "frequently" after each of several activities. The percentage of control school students indicating that various traditional activities took place frequently is much greater than the percentage of Trenton students. For example, 89.3 percent of control school A students and 76 percent of control school B students indicate that "listening to the teacher talk" is a frequent activity, as opposed to 63.5 percent and 59.6 percent of Trenton students in 1968 and 1969 respectively. At control schools A and B, 82.7 percent and 76.7 percent of the students, respectively, indicated that "discussing literature" was a frequent activity, while at Trenton only 38.9 percent in 1968 and 39.4 percent in 1969 indicated that such activity took place frequently. Similarly, 62.3 percent and 52.7 percent of the students in control schools A and B indicate that writing compositions is a frequent activity, as opposed to only 33.3 percent of Trenton students in 1968 and 27.4 percent in 1969. These three items alone suggest that control school students perceive a greater homogeneity of classroom activities than do Trenton students.[68]

In addition, students were asked to rank the three most frequent activities in their English classes. More students in the control schools than in Trenton ranked listening to the teacher talk, discussing literature, writing compositions, listening to the teacher read aloud, and reading aloud among the top three activities. On the other hand, more Trenton students ranked acting out plays, discussing paintings or photographs, listening to recordings, discussing compositions, doing library research, watching movies, and listening to music among the top three. The specific results of the rankings are summarized in table 8.[69] The

results here also indicate that Trenton students perceive greater heterogeneity in their classroom activities than do students in the control school programs.

TABLE 8. Class Activities Ranked among the Three Most Frequent

Activity	Percentage of Students Ranking Activity 1, 2, or 3			
	Control A	Control B	Trenton '68	Trenton '69
Writing Compositions	51.2	53.5	39.8	29.0
Discussing Literature	73.3	61.2	39.2	42.7
Listening to the Teacher Talk	83.3	72.0	67.8	65.7
Reading Aloud	6.9	12.9	4.4	6.0
Listening to the Teacher Read Aloud	17.1	19.0	8.0	11.1
Acting Out Plays	1.7	5.7	6.9	7.0
Discussing Paintings or Photos	2.4	1.5	17.6	10.3
Listening to Recordings	9.3	9.7	16.3	19.8
Discussing Compositions You Have Written	11.2	2.9	21.2	19.2
Doing Library Research	2.5	5.1	12.0	10.3
Watching Movies	1.0	7.9	23.4	24.8
Listening to Music	2.7	4.8	11.7	10.6

Classroom observations using the Flanders interaction analysis (see note 58) indicate that the level of student initiated talk is much higher in Trenton English classes than in those of the control schools. For example, in 1969 six of twenty-three observations revealed that "over 50 percent of the class time was taken up by student initiated talk. Two of these six classes involved over 70 percent student initiated talk.[70] Further, in 1969 slightly over 50 percent of all talk in the Trenton observations was student initiated talk.[71] Interestingly, it appears that student talk derives not so much from the indirect strategies enumerated by Flanders as from the use of objectives, concepts, and materials which are more appropriate to the abilities of the students. In fact, there is evidence that as student initiated talk increases, the teacher's use of language included in Flanders' first three categories (accepting feelings, praising or encouraging, and accepting or using student ideas) decreases. The implication may well be that because the Trenton program attempts to differentiate instruction, students are more able and willing to voice their ideas.[72]

Not all of the student talk in Trenton classes, however, is what most English teachers would regard as appropriate. One of the current clichés in the criticism of the teaching of English is that teachers talk too much. Students, the critics say, should be involved in "language production." Probably any talk on the part of students is better than no talk. On the other hand, students do not have to be in an English class to talk. The more important question has to do with the kind of talk rather than the extent or degree of talk. The mere fact that a lot of students say a lot of different things is not necessarily valuable. Given a finite number of class meetings, student talk should probably be channeled into constructive discussions. Random opinion giving is something which students do anyway (they actually do talk a good deal outside class). When opinion giving results in the reinforcement of unexamined stereotypes or produces hop, skip, and jump "discussions," as it sometimes did in the Trenton classes observed, it must be examined critically. For example, "in a class with over 70 percent student initiated talk, the discussion moved from statements of indignation over a parent who had made judgments about a book without reading it, to marijuana, sex, parent and adult inhibitions, students who smoke pot, adult biases, etc. The students moved at will from one topic to another with no apparent direction and without pulling all the topics together in any way."[73] The current emphasis on student talk may well lead to an assumption that any student talk is valuable in an English class, but the degree of student talk cannot be an unqualified criterion for judging the success of a course or a program. One must consider the kind of talk involved.

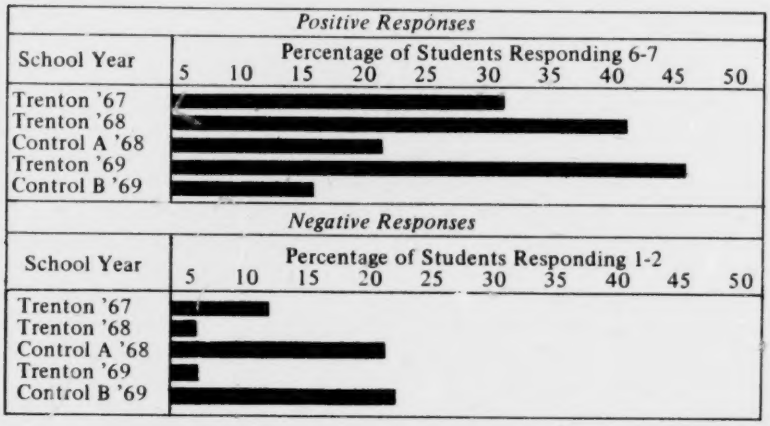
The most striking finding of the Trenton evaluation is the positive change in students' attitudes toward their English courses and their classroom activities. A brief questionnaire was administered to all Trenton students in the spring of 1967 before the full implementation of the elective program in the fall of 1967. In 1968 and 1969 a longer questionnaire was administered to Trenton students and to control school A students in 1968 and control school B students in 1969.*

*In 1967 at Trenton 1,083 students responded to the short questionnaire. The longer questionnaire was administered to 1,155 students in 1968 at Trenton, to 1,144 students in 1969, to 1,205 students in control school A, and to 725 students in control school B.

Many of the questionnaire items used a seven-point scale extending from a negative term at one end to a positive term at the other. For example, two scales used with some frequency were the "boring to interesting" and the "worthless to valuable" scales. Each scale appeared beneath a heading which requested that the student mark the scale to indicate his attitude toward some general or specific aspect of English.

One of the items requested that students mark a scale to indicate how much they had "enjoyed English during the past year." The results on this item for Trenton in 1967, 1968, and 1969 and for both control schools are partially represented in bar graph 1.[74] The sixth and seventh points on the scale represent a highly positive response, "very much," while the first and second represent a negative response, "not at all." It is clear that the number of students registering extreme positive attitudes toward their English classes increases steadily from 1967, when the elective program was in its pilot stage and involved only a fraction of the student body, to 1969. Concomitantly, the percentage of students registering extreme negative response drops by nearly half, from 11 percent in 1967 to 6 percent in 1968 and 6.2 percent in 1969. The magnitude of chi square for the total distribution over all five populations is 650.85. A magnitude of only 51.179 is necessary for significance at the .001 level. Clearly

BAR GRAPH 1. Student Responses to the Questionnaire Item: ". . . how much you have enjoyed English during the past year."



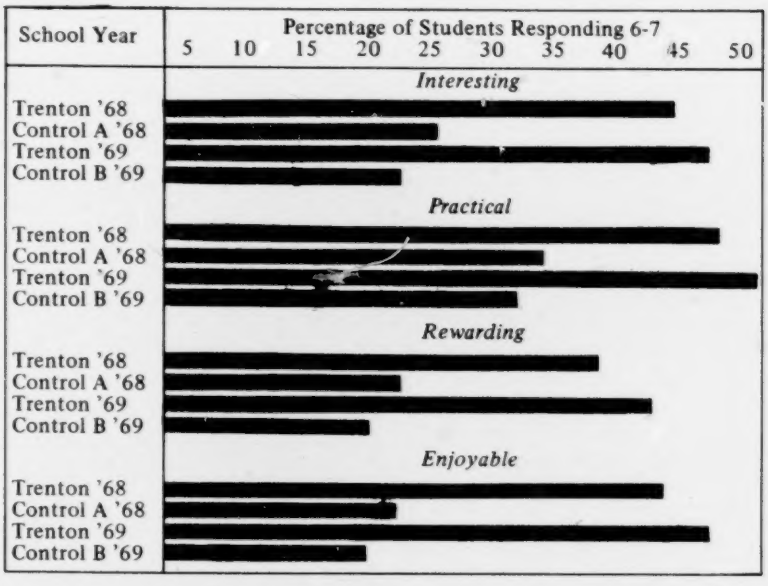
the difference is significant. However, it is equally clear that even without the elective program the attitudes of Trenton students are far more positive toward English than those of students in either of the control schools.

All of this is supported by the results of responses on the set of scales requesting that students respond to their English class activities. The percentages of extreme positive responses (6 and 7) for the "interesting to boring," "practical to useless," "rewarding to frustrating," and "enjoyable to irritating" scales for Trenton students in 1968 and 1969 as well as for students in both control schools appear in bar graph 2.[75] It is obvious that in the case of each scale the percentage of Trenton students registering an extreme positive response increases from 1968 to 1969 and that in each case the percentage of Trenton students indicating a high positive response is nearly *double* that of control school students. The chi square for the whole distribution on each of these four scales is significant at .001. These patterns are also borne out in responses to scales which requested that students respond to the "study of English in general." The percentage of extreme positive responses among Trenton students goes up from 29.3 percent in 1967 to 38.6 percent in 1969. At the same time, the percentage of positive responses among Trenton students is considerably higher than among control school students.

The pattern of increased positive responses among Trenton students, however, does not carry over to the scales which are concerned with the more specific, traditional aspects of English. Bar graph 3 illustrates a different pattern of responses on the "interesting to boring" scales. There is a striking drop in the percentage of Trenton students indicating a strong interest in literature, from 63.6 percent in 1967 to 51.8 percent in 1969. The percentage of students registering strong interest in composition remains virtually unchanged from 1967 to 1969. Indeed, the chi square for that distribution is not significant. There is a clear drop in interest in grammar, but then perhaps there ought to be.[76]

Despite the negative change in attitude toward the reading of literature and the lack of change in attitude toward composition, the Trenton elective program has clearly had a generally positive effect on student attitudes. Interviews with students confirmed the general findings of the questionnaire. Even the students indicating the most negative attitudes toward the Trenton program were able to find something in it which appealed to them, such as

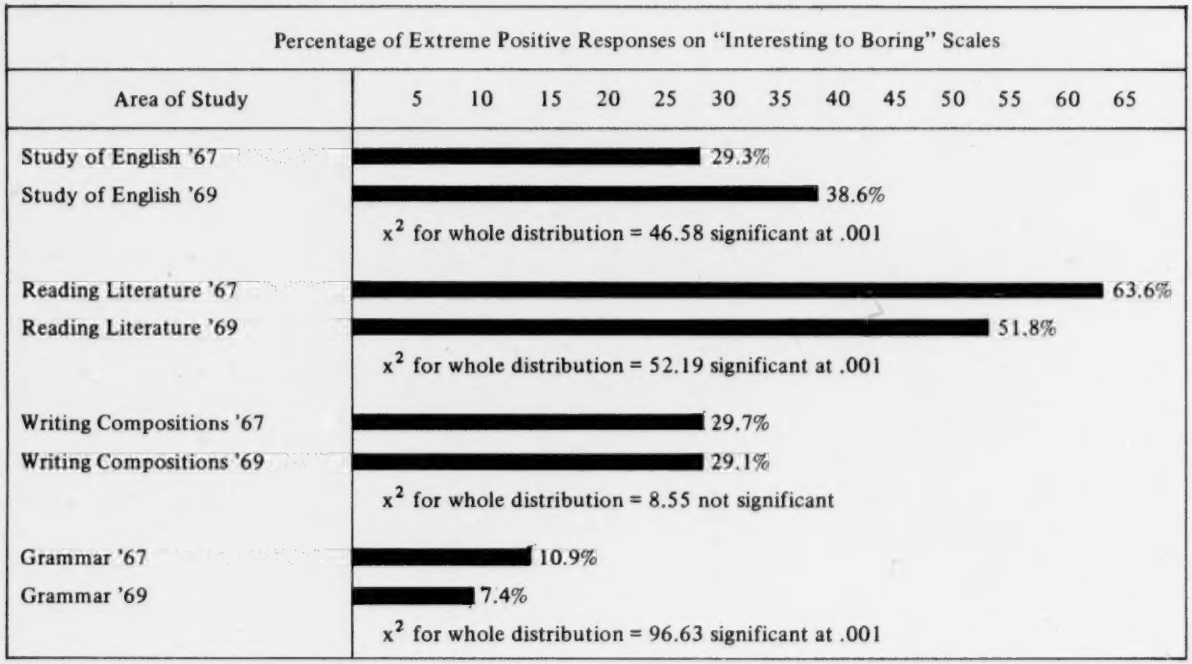
BAR GRAPH 2. Percentage of Positive Responses to English Class Activities



the opportunity to take filmmaking or even the chance to "steer away from courses [they] don't like."[77]

The aspects of the program which are responsible for increased positive attitudes, however, are not easy to specify. In part it is the expertise of the teachers, in part the variety of activities, in part the differentiation of instruction, and in part the elective aspect of the program, as well as other factors. The important point is the positive change.

BAR GRAPH 3. Degree of Trenton Students' Interest In Aspects of Traditional English


Percentage of Extreme Positive Responses on "Interesting to Boring" Scales
Area of Study
5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55 60 65
Study of English '67
29.3%
Study of English '69
38.6%
x² for whole distribution = 46.58 significant at .001
Reading Literature '67
63.6%
Reading Literature '69
51.8%
x² for whole distribution = 52.19 significant at .001
Writing Compositions '67
29.7%
Writing Compositions '69
29.1%
x² for whole distribution = 8.55 not significant
Grammar '67
10.9%
Grammar '69
7.4%
x² for whole distribution = 96.63 significant at .001

Conclusions

The elective programs included in this study are based on a series of assumptions which require examination. The foremost of these is the belief that they meet the interests, needs, and abilities of the students. As we have seen, many of the courses offered parallel college and traditional high school offerings and appear to reflect teacher interests rather than those of the students. Left on their own to develop a program, it is unlikely that students would produce so many courses on Shakespeare, surveys of English, American, and other literatures, the structure of the short story, or composition based on the sentence-paragraph-theme assumption. This is not to say that students *should* produce the whole curriculum on their own. Perhaps the curriculum should reflect the teachers' interests. They, presumably, are the ones who know the field. It does suggest that careful inventories of student responses to *each* course be made systematically. The fact that students enjoy choosing their poison does not mean that they will enjoy taking whatever type they have selected.

As for meeting the needs of the students, there is no evidence that any of the programs examined have made a systematic analysis of student needs. The assumption appears to be that because a variety of courses is offered, a student has the opportunity to choose those which best meet his "needs." It is altogether possible, however, that none of the courses meet the real needs of the students, except for fulfilling the graduation requirement in English. Certain needs are determined by the school itself, some by the occupations students will enter, some by the social groups in which they participate, some by their own interests and proclivities, and so forth. It might be possible to develop a program based on the multifold needs of the students, but whether or not such a program is desirable is open to question. Arguments have been advanced to the effect that, outside the school environment, neither reading nor writing are real needs for most people.[78] But then perhaps curricula should not be based exclusively on predictable needs; perhaps each course should be assessed on the basis of what it may help students to become. At any rate, the concept of "needs" in the elective programs

examined is innocent of careful examination. The most traditional English program can lay claim to serving the needs of its students with the same confidence that elective programs can. The term in this context, as Sir John Falstaff might point out, is only air.

Elective programs do go well beyond traditional programs in their attempts to provide courses appropriate to students with various ability levels. A major weakness of traditional programs is their attempt to require all students to do the same things regardless of their abilities and interests. The mere opportunity to choose provides an improvement on traditional programs. In addition, many programs have attempted to develop specific courses for students with various levels of ability in reading and writing. However, the assumption that with the guidance of teachers or counselors students will choose courses appropriate to their abilities is misleading for two reasons. First, it is predicated on such a highly generalized analysis of abilities—for example, "the student should have a strong command of communication skills"—that it provides little or no direction for the development of those abilities. The major advantage is that the student can estimate the ease with which he can complete the course requirements. Second, it suggests that all students enrolled in a given course will have certain abilities and powers in common, although in reality the range of abilities is likely to be almost as great as in a traditional English class. Yet, for the most part, elective courses proceed on the assumption that the students enrolled are very much the same. With only a few exceptions, there is little evidence that teachers vary their instruction to accord with the particular abilities of the students any more than do teachers in a traditional program. Even if students were capable of selecting courses appropriate to their own abilities on the basis of vague indicators of difficulty, the procedure might simply result in maintaining the abilities that students have when they enter the courses. If instruction is to increase the students' powers in the language arts and to expand their interests, it must be based on an analysis of the particular powers and interests of the students enrolled in the class. To treat all students as though they have the same interests and abilities is to make the same error that traditional programs have made, this time with the assurance that, after all, "the student has chosen his own fate."

A second assumption of elective programs is that the opportunity afforded teachers to specialize is beneficial. One result of

specialization appears to be the increased compartmentalization of subject matter: special courses in the European novel, the American short story, the paragraph, the research paper, and so forth. It may be that the "teaching task" is clearer, but it is clearer only at the expense of fragmenting the subject more than is necessary. In 1966 Squire and Applebee identified twelve hypotheses which they felt would be characteristic of sound English programs in selected high schools. One of these stated that "language, literature, and composition will be taught in *appropriate proportion and not as separate entities.* Instruction will be coordinated and sequential."[79] For the most part, the elective programs in this study have abandoned at least the latter half of the hypothesis as an indicator of sound instruction. Various aspects of English *are* taught as separate entities, and sequences of courses have been abandoned. A relatively small percentage of courses are the sort of idea- or theme-centered courses which permit maximum integration and coordination of language arts concerns. Despite protestations in several program descriptions that the "skills" of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking will be taught in every course, the evidence of the course descriptions suggests that the integration of such skills is no greater in most English elective courses than it would be in a course in geometry in which a student must also read, write, listen, speak, and think. The crucial difference is one of instructional emphasis. Writing out the proof for a theorem may involve more instruction in composition than does the assignment, collection, and correction of a theme. At least the geometry teacher is likely to spend more class time on preparing students to develop the proof adequately.

Specialization may well be a good thing for teachers, but the extent to which narrow specialties should be reflected in course offerings for high school students is certainly open to question. In a recent paper on elective programs Edmund J. Farrell lamented the development of

> unprofessional, uninformed, or misinformed specialization: specialization that disregards adolescents and the rhythms and requirements of their academic, psychological, and social growth; specialization that fosters prima donnas unwilling to assume in courses they teach their share of responsibility for the teaching of composition and language; specialization that is unmindful of the social/economic/political/technological matrix that molds curriculum today; specialization that is

> so global as to be meaningless or so preciously narrow as to be insignificant to our times. . . .[80]

As Farrell would be the first to admit, specialization properly used can be extremely valuable to an English program. Since most English teachers do not have the time to become fully conversant with every aspect of English, those teachers who have specialties might share their expertise as leaders of in-service training sessions to the profit of both students and teachers. Those with special skills in the teaching of composition, the use of drama, or the dynamics of small group discussions might open their classes to visits by their colleagues. But specialization which results in the compartmentalization of instruction in composition, reading, speech, various types of literature, and so forth is likely to be detrimental not only to the English program as a whole, but to the professional growth of individual teachers.

A third assumption common to several programs is that shorter courses and a greater variety of teachers are strengths of the elective system. Just as there is no difference between the achievement of large and small groups when the instructor lectures most of the time, so the length of a course probably makes no difference if instruction is mechanical, proceeding with no consideration of the specific abilities and interests of students enrolled in the class. If instruction is to be based upon the specific abilities of the students, a course of four, six, or eight weeks hardly provides the time necessary to become familiar with student interests and abilities. Indeed, some teachers will scarcely learn the names of the students before the end of the course. Undoubtedly, it is possible to teach certain mechanical skills, such as the use of the apostrophe, in very short periods of time. It is also possible to divide literary information into chunks and to teach those chunks in variable blocks of time (e.g., the characteristics of the short story). But if English aspires to something beyond the acquisition of mechanical skills and the rote learning of information—and it should—then courses must be long enough to allow teachers to adapt their instruction to the individual students and long enough to encourage students to explore an area in depth. Fortunately, the elective courses in the majority of programs do provide adequate time, but programs offering courses of ten or fewer weeks need to examine their goals and procedures very carefully.

A fourth assumption, that the choice of courses in and of itself

will have a meaningful, positive effect on both affective and cognitive responses, seems to be borne out, at least in terms of response to the freedom to choose and response to experiences in some courses. Whether or not such positive response will be maintained probably depends not so much on the freedom to choose, as on the character and quality of instruction in particular courses. College English majors, that strange breed who have already committed themselves to English, have been known to complain bitterly about their instruction, the freedom to choose notwithstanding.

As for growth in measurable cognitive areas, what little evidence is available suggests that elective programs, as they are presently designed, provide no advantage over traditional programs. The scores on composition samples and reading and writing test scores, of students in the Trenton elective program, for example, remain roughly comparable to those of students in traditional programs, even with less time and effort devoted to those skills on the part of both students and teachers. At the same time, however, it is also obvious that Trenton students have had the opportunity to learn more than students in a traditional program, simply because of the richness of the course offerings and the variety of class activities. Such variety, however, is certainly not restricted to elective programs.

Real differences in skill development, understanding, and attitudes toward various aspects of English are not likely to derive from a simple repackaging of traditional course content, coupled with the continuation of traditional teaching strategies. To the extent that elective programs are simply repackagings, as Roger J. Fitzgerald points out, "They represent neither change nor relevance. . . . They are . . . a stylish form of mis-education, a placebo given to curing symptoms and not the disease."[81] Real change will have to involve not simply an administrative change in course offerings, but a complete reexamination and revitalization of both course content and teaching strategies.

A fifth assumption is that learning is the student's responsibility. It always has been, of course. No teacher has ever been able to learn for his students. But when one places all the responsibility for learning on the students, as there is some tendency to do in elective programs, one reverts to an old pedagogical stance which granted little or no relationship between the presentation of material and the learning of it. Such a teacher was content to say,

"I present the material; the student either learns it or fails to learn it." The mere fact that a student has chosen a course does not release the teacher from his responsibility. Even in an elective program, when a student fails to learn, a good share of the responsibility is the teacher's.

The assumption that an elective program overcomes the weaknesses of traditional programs is true in only some respects. One of the greatest weaknesses of traditional programs is their tendency to require all students to do the same work at the same rate. Elective programs which offer courses at various levels of difficulty obviously avoid that problem. However, to the extent that individual courses fail to provide means of differentiating instruction, they make the same error as the traditional programs. Only a few respondents suggested any means at all of varying instruction within the context of particular courses. And none suggested any systematic means of dealing with the problem.

Other weaknesses in traditional programs have been carried over directly to elective programs: weaknesses in the rationale for course offerings, in the approaches to language, composition, and literature, and in course design. Indeed, in all but one instance, the program guides examined provided no rationale for their course offerings at all. The lack of a rationale may well be directly responsible for courses which have little basis, other than whim, for existence in an English program: "Photography," "The Natural History of New York City," "The Political Economists," "The Occult," "The Educational Experience" (complete with readings based on someone's graduate level bibliography), and a sports course which apparently involves little more than visits from "sports personalities" who explain their sports. At the same time, the lack of rationale in particular programs permits curious combinations of leftovers from traditional offerings: surveys of English literature, but none of American literature; a course or two in Shakespeare, but none on an American author; several generic courses on the novel, but none on drama, or vice versa; a strange assortment of composition courses; and a surprising lack of attention to language. It certainly should be useful to examine the reasons for offering not only particular courses, but particular combinations of those courses.

As we have seen, approaches to language, composition, and literature are highly traditional, seldom making use of recent developments in each area: the literature courses include a heavy

percentage of survey and generic courses; a majority of "language" courses deal primarily with mechanics, usage, and traditional school grammar; and composition programs are usually based on very naive notions about the composing process. Worse, many programs apparently attempt to replicate the offerings of college English departments. In fact, in many programs it appears that most courses are intended for the college bound. Only such nuggets as "Basic English," "Basic Reading," "Vocational English," "Who Dunnit?" and "Sports" are available for students with less than academic interests. The great machine that produces courses almost at random from a matrix composed of nations, authors, periods, and genres does little for the nonacademic student. Only Swift's professor in speculative learning at the Grand Academy of Lagado, working with a similar machine to derive all the knowledge in the world, would be amazed, however.

As for course design, in most cases there is little improvement over the more traditional programs. Surveys are still surveys, but with the additions of Russian literature, Asian literature, and various other vast sweeps through literary history. Courses which survey the history of Western culture are no more likely to be of high quality in an elective program than they were in traditional programs. Unfortunately, the necessity to produce a variety of courses may well have spawned a deluge of vague or global as well as ridiculously narrow course designs. With only a few exceptions, objectives continue to be so vague that many could apply to any course in the total high school curriculum. And the means for the teacher to evaluate the effectiveness of his own instruction are often ignored. However, various devices which permit the teacher to evaluate the students appear with comparative frequency. Finally, despite claims to the contrary, elective courses may have resulted in an even greater fragmentation of subject matter than Squire and Applebee found in their study a few years ago.[82]

Even though elective programs provide a valuable, innovative approach to English, a great deal remains to be done. The programs and the specific course offerings should be based on carefully considered rationales that truly reflect the needs, interests, and abilities of the students as well as the nature of the subject matter. Specific courses should be carefully scrutinized in terms of such rationales. The course designs should incorporate procedures for differentiating instruction appropriately, for insuring continuity in the growth of understanding and skill for each

student, for involving the students (rather than only the teacher) in the center of inquiry, and for continually assessing the affective and cognitive results of instruction. Further, efforts should be made to integrate instruction in language, composition, and literature, so that attention to one grows out of or accompanies attention to the others.

Nevertheless, what the teachers in elective programs have already accomplished represents a heroic effort, and they have done it under often impossible conditions. The creation of a wide variety of courses takes time, time that boards of education are all too unwilling to provide. But if the existing programs are to be improved, if new programs are to be more than overnight inspirations, teachers absolutely need time to read and research, time to question and analyze, and time to design and evaluate their programs carefully. They need released time during the school year and workshop time during vacations. The verbal encouragement of administrators is always pleasant, but few people have the energy to meet a full load of English classes, plan for the next day's lessons, write comments on compositions, and plan curriculum revisions as well. Time is an absolute necessity for curriculum change of the best kind, and only administrations can provide it.

If anyone doubts that the time granted will be used wisely, he need only look at what has already been accomplished. Elective programs have demonstrated that there is no need for all students to study the same material at the same time or in the same way. They have shown that there is no need to group students according to arbitrary chronological divisions or in mandatory ability tracks. They have demonstrated that allowing the student a greater role in planning his own education does not trail disaster in its wake. They have developed a great variety of approaches to English and many of the specific course designs are superior to anything in traditional programs. They have brought a more concrete awareness of student attitudes toward what they are supposed to be learning in English, an awareness that has been long in coming.

But perhaps most important of all, they have engendered a new sense of professionalism among teachers. Time was when methods courses and student teaching simply prepared prospective teachers to "get through" a pre-set curriculum with whatever group of students happened to appear on the opening day of school. One

got used to the program, that is to say, innured to its inconsistencies and inadequacies, and lived out his professional existence, or at least a few years of it, in this punch-the-clock atmosphere. Curriculum change was a matter of changing a title here, adding one there, and deciding whether to spend six rather than five weeks on the vagaries of pronominal case. While many individuals have been agitating for profound change for many years, elective programs represent the first massive shattering of the structures that shackled curricula in English. With the disappearance of the traditional patterns, teachers have begun to take an active role in the planning of curricula for their own students They are no longer content to be controlled by an outmoded curriculum. They (with the advice of their students) want to control the curriculum. Given the time to study, plan, and evaluate their work, English teachers, with their newly awakened sense of professional dignity and responsibility, may manage to revolutionize the teaching of English for all students, where the best efforts of the special centers have failed. For that result alone, elective programs, whether they be passing fancies or the beginning of a new tradition, will have been worth the effort.

Notes

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6. Craig Hogan, *The Multiple Elective Program in English* (Unpublished M.Ed. Thesis, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 1971), p. 17.
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28. Harvey, p. 86.
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47. *APEX*, p. 126.
48. Kubicek, p. 56.
49. Harvey, p. 47.
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Contributing Schools

The following schools and school systems contributed program guides, questionnaire responses, and/or other materials for use in this critical analysis.

Adams High School, South Bend, Indiana
Alcona Community High School, Lincoln, Michigan
Allen County High School, Scottsville, Kentucky
Ann Arundel High School, Annapolis, Maryland
Belleville High School, Belleville, Illinois
John Bowne High School, Flushing, New York
Bozeman High School, Bozeman, Montana
Louis D. Brandeis High School, New York, New York
Bridgewater-Raritan High School West, Raritan, New Jersey
Buffalo High School, Buffalo, Wyoming
Burbank Senior High School, Burbank, California
Burlington High School, Burlington, Vermont
Charleston High School, Charleston, West Virginia
Chillicothe High School, Chillicothe, Ohio
Clay High School, South Bend, Indiana
Grover Cleveland High School, Brooklyn, New York
Columbia High School, Richland, Washington
Concord High School, Mt. Diablo Unified School District, Mt. Diablo, California
Concordia Parish Schools, Vidalia, Louisiana
Cottonwood High School, Salt Lake City, Utah
Davenport High School, Davenport, Iowa
John Dewey High School, Brooklyn, New York
East Christian High School, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Elk Grove High School, Elk Grove, California
Englewood High School, Jacksonville, Florida
Fairfax County Schools, Fairfax, Virginia
Fayetteville-Manlius High School, Manlius, New York
Florence Township High School, Florence, New Jersey
Fort Hunt High School, Alexandria, Virginia
Alceé Fortier Senior High School, New Orleans, Louisiana
Franklin High School, Franklin, New Hampshire

Garnett High School, Garnett, Kansas
Gibault High School, Waterloo, Illinois
Gloucester High School, Gloucester, Virginia
Goshen High School, Goshen, Indiana
Greenfield Central High School, Greenfield, Indiana
Nathan Hale High School, Tulsa, Oklahoma
Hampton City Schools, Hampton, Virginia
Hickman High School, Columbia, Missouri
Highland Park High School, Highland Park, New Jersey
Jackson High School, South Bend, Indiana
Kennett High School, Conway, New Hampshire
Keokuk High School, Keokuk, Iowa
Kirkwood High School, Kirkwood, Missouri
Kremlin-Gildford High School, Kremlin-Gildford, Montana
LaSalle High School, South Bend, Indiana
Las Lomas High School, Walnut Creek, California
Laurel High School, Laurel, Delaware
Leesburg High School, Leesburg, Florida
Leitchfield High School, Grayson County, Kentucky
Lincoln High School, Des Moines, Iowa
R. A. Long High School, Longview, Washington
Loretto High School, Louisville, Kentucky
Los Alamos High School, Los Alamos, New Mexico
McGavock High School, Nashville, Tennessee
Madison High School, Mansfield, Ohio
Manteno High School, Manteno, Illinois
John Marshall High School, Glendale, West Virginia
Stephen T. Mather High School, Chicago, Illinois
Minot High School, Minot, North Dakota
Montgomery County Schools, Christiansburg, Virginia
Mount Dora High School, Mount Dora, Florida
Newburyport High School, Newburyport, Massachusetts
New Trier Township High School East, Winnetka, Illinois
Nicolet High School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Niles High School, Niles, Michigan
Niles Township High School West, Skokie, Illinois
Northampton High School, Northampton, Massachusetts
North Liberty High School, North Liberty, Indiana
Northwestern High School, Flint, Michigan
Oak Park-River Forest High School, Oak Park, Illinois
Olathe High School, Johnson County, Kansas

Padua Franciscan High School, Parma, Ohio
Walter Hines Page High School, Greensboro, North Carolina
Plainfield High School, Plainfield, Illinois
Point Loma High School, San Diego, California
Port Huron Northern High School, Port Huron, Michigan
Poway High School, Poway Unified School District, Poway, California
Regional School #7, Winsted, Connecticut
Riley High School, South Bend, Indiana
St. Ignatius Preparatory High School, San Francisco, California
St. Joseph High School, Atlanta, Georgia
St. Mary's High School, Annapolis, Maryland
St. Wendelin High School, Fostoria, Ohio
Sharon Senior High School, Sharon, Massachusetts
Ross Sheppard High School, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
O. L. Smith Junior High School, Dearborn, Michigan
Spanish Fork High School, Spanish Fork, Utah
Staples High School, Westport, Connecticut
John Swett High School, Crockett, California
Taft High School, Watertown, Connecticut
Trenton High School, Trenton, Michigan
Trigg High School, Cadiz, Kentucky
Trinity High School, Dickinson, North Dakota
Tyee High School, Seattle, Washington
Upper Dublin High School, Upper Dublin Township, Fort Washington, Pennsylvania
Valley High School, Gilcrest, Colorado
Wakefield High School, Arlington, Virginia
Waterville Junior High School, Waterville, Maine
Wayne High School, Wayne, Michigan
West Lafayette High School, West Lafayette, Indiana
Whitmer High School, Washington Local School District, Lucas County, Ohio
Withrow High School, Cincinnati, Ohio

Schools to Contact

The schools and school systems in the following list have had elective programs in effect for two years or more and have indicated a willingness to share information about their programs. This list, of course, does not pretend to be comprehensive. A number of people helped to locate the schools included in the list, and to them we are grateful.

California

Burbank Senior High School
902 North Third Street
Burbank, California 91502
Contact: Caroline Barnes, Curriculum Coordinator
Grades 11, 12; 1900 students; 35 courses

Ygnacio Valley High School
1865 Oak Grove Road
Concord, California 94520
Contact: John W. Platt, English Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 1500 students; 27 courses

John Swett High School
P.O. Box 757
Crockett, California 94525
Contact: Robert E. Beck, English Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 550 students; 11 courses

College Park High School
201 Viking Drive
Pleasant Hill, California 94549
Contact: William H. Thomas, English Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 1000 students; 32 courses

Point Loma High School
2335 Chatsworth Boulevard
San Diego, California 92106
Contact: Madelon McGowan, English Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 1200 students; 19 courses

Las Lomas High School
1460 South Main Street
Walnut Creek, California 94596
Contact: J. Anthony Principal
Grades 11, 12; 1300 students; 20 courses

Colorado

Mitchell High School
1205 Potter Drive
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80909
Contact: George Dalgleish, Coordinator of Secondary Education
Grades 9, 11, 12; 550 students; 12 courses

Connecticut

Staples High School
70 North Avenue
Westport, Connecticut 06880
Contact: Anthony Arciola, English Department Chairman
Grade 12; 1250 students; 22 courses

Delaware

Laurel High School
Laurel, Delaware 19956
Contact: Eleanor D. Williamson, Language Arts Department Chairman
Grades 9-12; 250 students; 11 courses

Florida

Fort Pierce Central High
1101 Edwards Road
Ford Pierce, Florida 33450
Contact: Mrs. Imogene R. Dolozik, Language Arts Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 1196 students; 30 courses

McArthur High School
6501 West Hollywood Boulevard
Hollywood, Florida 33024
Contact: Mrs. D. M. English, Department Head
Grades 10-12; 2560 students; 41 courses

Leesburg Senior High School
1401 Meadows Drive
Leesburg, Florida 32748
Contact: Mrs. Peggy Hand, Department Chairman
Grades 9-12; 1500 students; 26 courses

Norland Senior High School
1050 Northwest 195th Street
Miami, Florida 33169
Contact: Marilyn R. Peterson, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 2550 students; 25 courses

Mount Dora High School
700 North Highland Street
Mount Dora, Florida 32757
Contact: Cynthia Schumacher, Curriculum Generalist
Grades 10-12; 242 students; 31 courses

Maynard Evans High School
4949 Silver Star Road
Orlando, Florida 32808
Contact: Wana Senter, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 2400 students; 42 courses

Georgia

St. Joseph High School
320 Courtland, Northeast
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
Contact: Sister Carolyn Bernard Connor, English Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 350 students; 14 courses

Illinois

Belleville Township High School West
2600 West Main
Belleville, Illinois 62221
Contact: Dale R. Van Blair, English Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 1500 students; 37 courses

Manteno High School
Manteno, Illinois 60950
Contact: Mrs. Jeanette Sullivan, English Department
Grades 11, 12; 150 students; 10 courses

Oak Park-River Forest High School
201 North Scoville Avenue
Oak Park, Illinois 60302
Contact: Carroll R. Anderson, English Department Assistant Chairman
Grades 10-12; 3000 students; 15 courses

Plainfield High School
612 Commercial Street
Plainfield, Illinois 60544
Contact: Helen Lukancic, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 1000 students; 30 courses

Niles Community High School West
Oakton at Edens
Skokie, Illinois 60076
Contact: Richard R. Antes, Director of Language Instruction
Grades 10-12; 3100 students; 47 courses

Gibault High School
501 Columbia Avenue
Waterloo, Illinois 62298
Contact: Sister Regina Siegfried, English Department Chairman
Grades 9-12; 360 students; 15 courses

Indiana

Greenfield-Central High School
810 North Broadway
Greenfield, Indiana 46140
Contact: Donald Rickett or Robert Caldwell, English Department Co-chairman
Grades 11, 12; 500 students; 25 courses

West Lafayette High School
Leslie and Grant
West Lafayette, Indiana 47906
Contact: Bernarr Folta, English Department Chairman
Grades 9-12; 850 students; 39 courses

Iowa

Cedar Rapids Community School District
346 Second Avenue, Southwest
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403
Contact: Mildred Middleton, English Language Arts Coordinator
Grades 10-12; 4782 students; 33 courses

Davenport Community High School
1022 Main Street
Davenport, Iowa 52803
Contact: Darrell Lietz, Coordinator of English
Grades 10-12; 4900 students; 28 courses

Lincoln High School
Southwest Ninth Avenue and Loomes
Des Moines, Iowa 50315
Contact: Mrs. Lillian Hildreth, Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 1200 students; 23 courses

Iowa City Community School District
1040 William Street
Iowa City, Iowa 52240
Contact: Martha Booth, Coordinator of English Language Arts
Grades 11, 12; 987 students; 21 courses

Keokuk Senior High School
2285 Middle Road
Keokuk, Iowa 52632
Contact: John H. Artman, Humanities Program Coordinator
Grades 10-12; 240 students; 10 courses

Mason City High School
1700 Fourth Street, Southeast
Mason City, Iowa 50401
Contact: F. Neil Puhl, Language Arts Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 1400 students; 21 courses

Kansas

Garnett High School
North Oak
Garnett, Kansas 66032
Contact: Mrs. Elizabeth McDonald English Department Chairman
Grades 9-12; 450 students; 20 courses

Kentucky

Allen County High School
Box 127
Alien County
Scottsville, Kentucky 42164
Contact: Bennie J. Keen, Principal
Grades 11, 12; 206 students; 17 courses

Trigg County High School
Cadiz, Kentucky 42211
Contact: Arnold S. Oaken, Principal
Grades 11, 12; 300 students; 20 courses

Harrison County High School
Route #4
Cynthiana, Kentucky 41031
Contact: Mrs. John P. Lair, Coordinator
Grades 10-12; 575 students; 37 courses

Leitchfield High School
726 Mill Street
Leitchfield, Kentucky 42754
Contact: Jane Bratcher, Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 170 students; 22 courses

Ahrens Vocational Technical High School
546 South First Street
Louisville, Kentucky 40222
Contact: Mrs. Carol Mattingly, English Department Head
Grade 11; 350 students; 23 courses

Iroquois High School
4615 Taylor Boulevard
Louisville, Kentucky 40215
Contact: Charles Allen, Department Head
Grades 11, 12; 1000 students; 20 courses

Jefferson County Public Schools
3332 Newburg Road
Louisville, Kentucky 40218
Contact: Hugh B. Cassell, Supervisor of English
Grades 9-12; 5000 students; 45 courses

Loretto High School
723 South 45th Street
Louisville, Kentucky 40211
Contact: Sister Emmanuel, English Department Head
Grades 10-12; 130 students; 30 courses

Louisiana

Alceé Fortier Senior High School
New Orleans, Louisiana 70115
Contact: Mrs. Patricia Armington, English Department Head
Grades 10-12; 1500 students; 25 courses

Maine

Waterville Junior High School
Gilman Street
Waterville, Maine 04901
Contact: Gary Lisherness, Language Arts Department Chairman
Grades 7, 8; 640 students; 17 courses

Maryland

St. Mary's High School
114 Duke of Gloucester Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Contact: Sister Sharon Dei, SSND, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 264 students; 30 courses

Massachusetts

Newburyport High School
Newburyport, Massachusetts 01950
Contact: Elizabeth C. Esty, English Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 1000 students; 32 courses

Northampton High School
308 Elm Street
Northampton, Massachusetts 01060
Contact: Rosanne S. Soffer, English Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 1100 students; 32 courses

Michigan

O.L. Smith Junior High School
23851 Yale
Dearborn, Michigan 48124
Contact: Belinda Fenby, English Department Chairman
Grades 7-9; 700 students; 27 courses

Northwestern High School
Carpenter Road
Flint, Michigan 48505
Contact: Elizabeth Calkins, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 35 courses

East Christian High School
2300 Plymouth Road
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506
Contact: Eugene C. Hage, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 600 students; 20 courses

Alcona High School
Lincoln, Michigan 48742
Contact: Ron Smith, English Department Chairman
Grades 9-12; 600 students; 16 courses

Niles Senior High School
1441 Eagle Street
Niles, Michigan 49120
Contact: Edward Kelly, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 1400 students; 25 courses

Port Huron Northern High School
1799 Kraft Road
Port Huron, Michigan 48060
Contact: Ruth M. Meyer, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 2176 students; 40 courses

Trenton High School
2601 Charlton Road
Trenton, Michigan 48183
Contact: Donald F. Weise, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 1200 students; 47 courses

Wayne Memorial High School
Glenwood Avenue
Wayne, Michigan 48184
Contact: Ms. A. S. Kemezis, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 2000 students; 38-44 courses

Missouri

Hickman High School
1104 North Providence Road
Columbia, Missouri 65201
Contact: Conrad Stawski, Language Arts Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 2100 students; 21 courses

Nebraska

Lincoln Southeast High School
2930 South 37th Street
Lincoln, Nebraska 68506
Contact: Mrs. Mary C. Commers, Chairman of English
Grades 10-12; 1400 students; 57 courses

Marian High School
7400 Military Avenue
Omaha, Nebraska 68134
Contact: Sister Mary Adolorata Watson, Principal
Grades 9-12; 660 students; 24 courses

Omaha Public Schools
3902 Davenport Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68131
Contact: Lillian Durkop, Supervisor of English
Grades 10-12; 7500 students; 70 courses

Scottsbluff Senior High School
313 East 27th
Scottsbluff, Nebraska 69361
Contact: T. R. Mihane, Director of Secondary Education
Grades 10-12; 985 students; 37 courses

Wayne-Carroll Public Schools
Wayne, Nebraska 68787
Contact: Mrs. Walter L. Moller, English Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 220 students; 30 courses

New Jersey

Highland Park High School
Fifth Avenue
Highland Park, New Jersey 08904
Contact: Austin Gumbs, Principal
Grades 11, 12; 450 students; 18 courses

Bridgewater-Raritan High School West
P. O. Box 97
Raritan, New Jersey 08869
Contact: Leonard Stilo, English Department Chairman
Grades 9-12; 1800 students; 21 courses

New York

John Dewey High School
50 Avey
Brooklyn, New York 11223
Contact: Carl Field, Acting Chairman
Grades 10-12; 60 courses

Grover Cleveland High School
Brooklyn, New York 11237
Contact: Robert Weinberger, English Department Chairman
Grades 9-12; 500 students; 21 courses

John Bowne High School
63-25 Main Street
Flushing, New York 11367
Contact: George Cohn, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 1000 students; 15-20 courses

Fayetteville-Manlius Senior High School
East Seneca Turnpike
Manlius, New York 13104
Contact: Mrs. Judith R. Gordon, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 1320 students; 34 courses

William Howard Taft High School
240 East 172nd Street
New York, New York 10457
Contact: Robert M. Phillips, Assistant Principal, Supervisor, English
Grades 11, 12; 600 students; 24 courses

Louis O. Brandeis High School
145 West 84th Street
New York, New York 10024
Contact: Martin Cooper, Chairman of English
Grades 10-12; 700-1200 students (varies); 10-20 courses (varies)

North Carolina

Walter Hines Page Senior High School
201 Page Street
Greensboro, North Carolina 27408
Contact: Mrs. Carolyn L. Lithgo, Language Arts Coordinator
Grades 10-12; 1800 students; 54 courses

North Dakota

Trinity High School
Dickinson, North Dakota 58601
Contact: Sister Charlene Schneider, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 365 students; 18 courses

Ohio

Chillicothe High School
Yoctangee Parkway
Chillicothe, Ohio 45601
Contact: Martha Cottrill, Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 825 students; 34 courses

Withrow High School
2488 Madison Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45208
Contact: Mary Louise Schroth, Administrative Supervisor, Secondary English
Grades 10-12; 2400 students; 65 courses

Defiance Senior High School
Defiance Road
Defiance, Ohio 43512
Contact: William H. Zipfel, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 992 students; 42 courses

St. Wendelin High School
533 North Countyline Street
Fostoria, Ohio 44830
Contact: John Pocs, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 260 students; 22 courses

Whitmer High School
5601 Clegg Drive
Washington Local Schools
Lucas County, Ohio 43613
Contact: Margaret W. Towe, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 2200 students; 29 courses

Walter E. Stebbins High School
1900 Harshman Road
Dayton, Ohio 45424
Contact: Mrs. Ruth D. Hallman, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 1300 students; 63 courses

Padua High School
6740 State Road
Parma, Ohio 44134
Contact: Robert Skapura, College Prep Coordinator
Grades 11, 12; 600 students; 24 courses

Warren G. Harding High School
860 Elm Road, Northeast
Warren, Ohio 44483
Contact: Mrs. Elaine Smith, English Department Head
Grades 11, 12; 1000 students; 34 courses

Wooster Senior High School
Corner Bowman and Quinby
Wooster, Ohio 44691
Contact: Paul Ladd, Principal
Grades 9-12; 1400 students; 23 courses

Chaney High School
731 Hazelwood Avenue
Youngstown, Ohio 44509
Contact: John D. Rienzo, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 1350 students; 46 courses

Oklahoma

Muskogee High School
3200 East Shawnee
Muskogee, Oklahoma 74401
Contact: Mrs. Renna Elliott, English Department Chairman
Grade 12; 719 students; 7 courses

Ponca City High School
Fifth and Overbrook
Ponca City, Oklahoma 74601
Contact: Mrs. LaVelle Wittmer, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 26 courses

Tennessee

Hillsboro High School
3812 Hillsboro Road
Nashville, Tennessee 37215
Contact: Edna L. Martin, English Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 207 students; 6 courses

McGavock High School
McGavock Pike
Nashville, Tennessee 37317
Contact: James G. Currey, Jr., Team Leader, English
Grades 10-12; 2700 students; 28 courses

Tyner High School
Tyner Road
Tyner, Tennessee 37392
Contact: Mrs. Elizabeth C. Potts, English Department Chairman
Grades 11, 12; 500 students; 22 courses

Utah

Cottonwood High School
5715 South 1300 East
Salt Lake City, Utah 84121
Contact: Mildred Rice, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 2000 students; 55 courses

Spanish Fork High School
Spanish Fork, Utah 84660
Contact: Ruth Andrus, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 850 students; 19 courses

Virginia

Fairfax County Public Schools
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Contact: Mary Rowan, Curriculum Specialist in English
Grades 7-12; 40,000 students; 800 courses

Gloucester High School
Gloucester, Virginia 23061
Contact: T. M. Emory, Director of Instruction
Grades 9-12; 814 students; 21-28 courses

Osbourn High School
9005 Tudor Lane
Manassas, Virginia 22110
Contact: Alice M. Linton, English Department Chairman
Grades 9-12; 1400 students; courses vary each quarter

Washington

Columbia High School
930 Long Avenue
Richland, Washington 99352
Contact: Mrs. Julia Davis, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 1850 students; 37 courses

Tyee Senior High School
4424 South 188th Street
Seattle, Washington 98188
Contact: W. A. Woodworth, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 975 students; 54 courses

West Virginia

University High School
Morgantown, West Virginia 26506
Contact: Paul McGhee, Principal
Grades 10-12; 478 students; 43 courses

Madonna High School
Michael Avenue
Weirton, West Virginia 26062
Contact: Walter R. Wielch, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 312 students; 40 courses

Wisconsin

Nicolet High School
6701 North Port Washington Road
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53217
Contact: Jean Jacobson, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 1600 students; 25 courses

Wyoming

Buffalo High School
Buffalo, Wyoming 82834
Contact: Helen Meldrum, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 350 students; 40 courses

Vermont

Burlington High School
52 Institute Road
Burlington, Vermont 05401
Contact: L. Lucille White, English Department Chairman
Grades 10-12; 1650 students; 31 courses

Questionnaire for Department Chairmen

(Following is the list of questions which were asked of department chairmen who particpated in this study.)

1. High School name _____
2. Community and state _____
3. Population of community _____
4. Explain briefly the socioeconomic background of your school area. _____
5. Approximate enrollment in total English program _____
6. How many English teachers in your department are involved in the elective program? _____
7. How long has your elective program been in effect? _____
8. What were the most significant problems you and your department faced in developing and implementing your program?
9. What conditions were necessary to the development and implementation of your program?
10. What advantages do you feel an elective program has over traditional programs? (a) For students? (b) For teachers?
11. What methods do the teachers use systematically to insure that the instruction in a given course will be appropriate to the students enrolled in it?
12. What methods have you used to collect evidence of the effectiveness of your program? Please attach copies of unpublished instruments your may have used in your efforts.
13. To what extent do you feel standardized tests of reading and composition would provide an adequate measure of student progress in your program? If you do not feel such tests are adequate, please explain why.

14. Please evaluate the overall effectiveness of your elective program and explain the basis for your evaluation. If possible, please attach any reports of evaluation conducted by you, your staff, or others.
15. What changes do you feel are necessary to the improvement of your elective program?
16. Please add any comments you feel would be useful in reviewing the state of elective programs in English.